

Shearing

Promoting our industry, sport and people

Number 121: (Vol 42, No 2) April 2026
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The Gear Man, playing with gear. Nathan Stratford Esq. Charly Harvey Photo. (Story page 36.)

Profile: Ike Robin
Golden Shears Report
Three-stand lamb record
Four-stand womens record
Mainshear at Westwood Farm



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Tribute: Oti Mason
Let's not blame Rudds!
Forde and Ingram in 1996
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UNDER COVER STORY

Greetings readers and Facebook followers and welcome to this 121st edition of *Shearing* magazine, No 2 of Vol. 42. Well, it's been busy little couple of months, you might say, and all too soon the warmth of summer is giving way to the colder months. But hopefully we have gathered together an interesting mix of stories and photos to entertain, and documented some events that have now become history.

We issued a 'World Championships Special Edition' last month and, while we revisit a little of that information here, it also allowed us to focus elsewhere for this issue – the 'something old, something new, something borrowed' recipe.

An account of the two-stand record set by Darin Forde and Wayne Ingram 30 years ago (bettered by Te Huia and Welch in 2012) is something old for we of the veterans age, but may be entirely new for many of our readers. And the interest in setting records shows no sign of waning, evidenced by our stories at pages 36 (three-stand lambs) and 61 (womens four-stand). We look back too at the role Ian Rutherford played over a 20-year period in establishing shearer training in South Africa. So well did he do his job, we suggest, South African dominance of blade shearing remains to this day.

We also take a look at this year's mainshear at Westwood Farm, in Western Southland. Established in 1885 by Irish settler Hugh Erskine, the property remains in Erskine family ownership to this day.

We pay tribute on the passing of two industry 'identities' in champion woolhandler Oti Mason and champion bloke, Noel Passau, with condolences to their respective whanau.

Best wishes for the winter – we'll do it all again in August. Meantime, Anzac Day approaches ...

IN THE TRENCH

*Every night I sleep, and every night I dream
That I'm strolling with my sheep by the old stream.*

*Every morn I wake, and every morn I stand
And watch the shrapnel break on the smashed land.*

*Some night I'll fall asleep, and will not wake at dawn.
I'll lie and feed my sheep on a green lawn.*

(Australian war poet Leon Gellert, May 1915)

*Ka kite ano
Nga mihi, Des Williams*



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Ike Robin – from Shearing's Hall of Fame

By Michael Fowler

I recently came across Ihakara Te Tuku Rapana (1886–1968), known as Ike Robin, as part of a project I was researching and writing – and there was more to this man than I first realised. I was quite taken by this man, and here is a snippet of his life.

Ike was born in Wairoa in 1886, but his family moved to Kohupātiki, off Farndon Rd, when he was young, and Ike would live there for the rest of his life.

Leaving school at 15, Ike entered the employment of sheep station owner George Prior Donnelly as his chauffeur and mechanic for his horse and buggy. He would leave the Donnellys and join his father shearing and undertaking general farm duties at the Chambers' Te Mata Station.

Ike was just over 6 feet (1.83m) tall and the farm life physically toughened him up.

At age 20 Ike reached his highest daily tally of shearing 150 sheep at Te Mata Station, which went to 200 a year later, then to 300 the following year. Before leaving Te Mata, he got to 343 in one day.

He would leave Te Mata Station to travel around the central North Island to work for other shearing contractors – and while at Mangaohane Station he reached his highest shearing tally ever of 358 sheep over eight hours and 20 minutes.

Shearing competitions held at the Hawke's Bay A&P show were entered regularly by Ike and one year he took out seven first places, three seconds and a third.

Around the mid-1910s he formed his own shearing contracting business and operated in Taihape, Hawke's Bay and Wellington areas. As Ike was very religious, he made sure his workers behaved according to his standards, but good clean fun of singing and music was enjoyed by the shearing gangs after a hard day's work.

At the peak of his business he employed 100 men and gave jobs to many Māori who were homeless or without a job.

His shearing gangs were in high demand, and the friendly and approachable Ike was widely liked by the sheep stations he worked for – although on one occasion in 1919 matters got a bit tense when manager of Mangaohane Station, Charles Ensor, refused to allow Ike to use the gang's own cook. The result – the food reportedly "was as bad as it could be". At the next station, Ngamatea, they were allowed their own cook and Ike could report there was "the best of food". His gang shored 41,000 sheep at Mangaohane and 13,000 at Ngamatea.

He was a natural sportsman and was described as an "exponent of all athletic games". In addition to athletic sports, he was captain of the Hastings rugby team.

At the Caledonian Games in Napier (his mother Riripeti Te Auē Roberts was of Scottish and Ngāti Kahungunu descent) he was a regular competitor during the 1900s and won almost all the field events he entered. One year he won the shot-put, hammer throw, caber toss, high jump – and for what he would become famous – he also was wrestling champion. He received £26 for his wins – a substantial amount then.

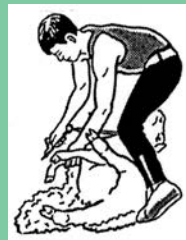
Above right: Ike Robin, "exponent of all athletic games". Photo credit: Alexander Turnbull Library PAColl-5671-37.



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He was Māori wrestling champion of New Zealand in 1919, which was then a fledgling sport here.

In May 1924 at the Napier Municipal Theatre, he took on MA Sunni for the New Zealand heavyweight championship. It would be an easy victory for Ike which he completed within 15 minutes.

An outdoor wrestling match in October 1925 occurred against world middle weight champion American Walter Miller at Nelson Park, Hastings, for the Australasian heavyweight championship. This was the earliest event of its kind in New Zealand and attended by 12,000 people, including Governor-General Sir Charles Fergusson. Ike won and collected £500 – a small fortune. He would also fight in Australia several times.

The Polish ex-world champion, heavyweight wrestler Stanislaus Zbyszko, *en route* to Melbourne aboard the *Niagara*, telegraphed the New Zealand Wrestling Association that he would be arriving in Auckland on 21 June 1926 and sought an opponent to wrestle in Auckland – which would be Ike. Such was the interest, 1500 people seeking admission to the bout were turned away.

Ike Robin would lose on points to Zbyszko (then 45 years old) in six, six-minute rounds – although lighter at 15 stone 9lb (99.3kg) to Ike's 18 stone 7lb (117.5kg).

Zbyszko announced to the packed crowd in the Auckland Town Hall after the fight that Ike was the strongest man he had ever met and with a couple of months training "would be a world-beater".

In order to compete as a professional, due to a lack of opponents in New Zealand, Ike would have had to travel overseas. He decided not to do this and retired. Stanislaus

Zbyszko had offered £1000 for expenses for Ike to travel to America to wrestle competitively, but he turned this down, preferring to stay nearer his whānau. Before retiring he defeated Clarence Weber in Melbourne in 1926 to become Australasian heavyweight champion. His popularity was such that a patented wire strainer for fencing was named the "Ike Grip" in his honour.

Ike (**pictured**) did come out of retirement in 1930 briefly, and then resumed full training in 1932 to compete against Finnish wrestler Peter Limitkin in Wellington, which he won.

American Abe Kaplin was next at the Hastings Municipal Theatre in September 1932, which was a draw. In Napier the following year – his final year of wrestling - he fought another American, Harry Mamos, which resulted in a draw. He had another bout after this, but by then he'd had enough. Such was his reputation in the wrestling world, long after he had retired, overseas wrestlers would visit him at Kohupātiki.

Ike served in the Anglican church as a lay preacher for nearly six decades. He practised Christian charity and regularly donated fruit and vegetables to the Māori Anglican Church.

As an accomplished orator, he would conduct many a successful hui. He was influenced by Apirana Ngata, and a close friend of his was Bishop F A Bennett, who he would often accompany around New Zealand in support of his ministry. Another close friend was Sir Turi Carroll, also born in Wairoa, a Ngāti Kahungunu leader and successful farmer.

He was a founding member of the Heretaunga Māori Choir and would tour with them throughout the North Island. When the Trapp singers – who were the inspiration for the musical of *The Sound of Music* – came to Hastings, he entertained them at Kohupātiki.

Ike would recall one of the proudest moments of his life was when his granddaughter Maisie (Mei Irihapiti) Robin was chosen as the model for the statute of Pānia on Napier's Marine Parade.

In the 1950 New Year Honours he was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for social services to Māori.

Ike Robin's life can today be an inspiration for many in the making of right choices and selfless service.

In many ways my friend Henare O'Keefe reminds me of Ike Robin – who Henare knew. And if Ike were alive today, I am sure, amongst many other people, he would be very proud of Henare.

He first wife Mata Kato passed away in 1917. He remarried in 1918 to Mei Pere (Mei also had shearing gangs).

One of Ngāti Kahungunu's favourite sons and elders, Ike Robin passed away aged 81 in 1968 and was laid to rest at Kohupātiki.

* * * * *

Michael Fowler (mfhistory@gmail.com) is a contract researcher and commercial business writer of Hawke's Bay history. Follow him on (Facebook) Michael Fowler's Historic Hawke's Bay



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Yakkity Yak! Christelle Jeannet French woolhandling judge

It's not unusual to see a knitter or two in the audience at a shearing and woolhandling event, or a spinning/knitting demonstration, as was the case in the Fan Zone during the Golden Shears world championships at Masterton recently. But it is unusual to see someone spinning, using a simple little drop spinning spindle, consisting of a wooden stick and a weighted disk or whorl, which is suspended in the air creating a yarn by manual twisting of the raw fibres.

Filling in time at the War Memorial Stadium between judging assignments, Christelle Jeannet, a woolhandling judge from France, could be found doing just that. If that wasn't unusual enough in itself, she was spinning yak fibre, or to be specific, the dark brown fine undercoat. This luxurious extra fine fibre layer (15-19 micron) is generally shed or combed out in late spring early summer and is comparable to Cashmere fibre and also with similar properties to merino wool: being warm, soft, breathable, odour resistant and, of course, totally renewable.

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After spinning, Christelle was going to two-ply the fibre and then create a knitted product, which would be so warm, soft and extremely light.

Like many, Christelle's interest in judging is an extension of her wool passion, and 2026 in Masterton is the third occasion at which she had adjudicated, the first in France 2019, followed by Scotland in 2023.

Living in the heart of France she has established and developed over the past 20 or so years a hands-on small wool business, specifically using coloured black/brown/beige wool fibre. Operating a fully integrated system, Christelle literally visits breeders at shearing time, sorts and selects fleece wool which is then sent to a network of companies for further processing (from scouring to weaving and knitting), to develop a natural range of 100% pure virgin wool textile products.

In addition to raising awareness and diversity of the wool product and properties, she offers independent professional training courses, now in conjunction with four others, around the techniques of manual wool to finished product.

For further insight and information check out: Laines-seraphita.org.



Above: Christelle Jeannet, woolhandling judge and spinner of fine yarns. (Barbara Newton photo.) Below left: Christelle judging New Zealand's Marika Braddick in the world championships woolhandling heats. (Shearing magazine.)



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Unique shears doubles for blades hopefuls

Two blades shearers scored double triumphs at the Inangahua A&P Show's Reefton Shears on Saturday 7 February 2026. Allan Oldfield, who won the individual and teams titles for New Zealand at the Golden Shears world shearing and woolhanding championships in France in 2019, won the open blades final and the senior machine shearing final.

Frenchwoman Maureen Cadet, from Brittany, matched the effort by winning the intermediate blades event and the junior machine shearing final.

It was the first time a second [intermediate] blades event had been held at the show, staged on a go-with-the-flow basis by organiser Sam Win to give world championships entrants more chances, with few other competition blades shearing opportunities available in New Zealand post-Christmas.

Top: It's not quite the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, but the Aria Domain provided a worthy substitute venue for the first of three tests against the touring Welshmen. Centre: Protagonists Gwion Lloyd Evans and Toa Henderson doing battle over 20 lambs, with New Zealand's winning margin just 1.2 points (113.6 to 114.85). Above: Neil Fagan (manager), Toa Henderson and Jack Fagan; Rhydian Evans (manager) Gwion Lloyd Evans and Llyr Jones.

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Golden Shears World Council

By Des Williams

World shearing and woolhandling championships since 1984 have been administered by the Golden Shears World Council, which was formed at Euroa, Australia, from a meeting held on 27 October 1980. Australian author and shearing historian Bernie Walker OAM described the background to World Council's formation in his book, *A Test for the Best*, published in 2014:

"Two Golden Shears world shearing championships had been held prior to the formation of World Council. The first championship was held in June 1977 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Royal Bath & West and Southern Counties Society Show at Shepton Mallet in Somerset, England. John W Davis MBE, secretary of the Show, had been seeking a way of marking the occasion and he suggested holding a world shearing championship as Bath & West had been affiliated with the original Golden Shears at Masterton, New Zealand, since 1963.

"Although it is generally accepted this was the first Golden Shears world championship, it was not presented as such. Twelve countries sent representatives to contest the event which was won by Roger Cox, New Zealand, ahead of Peter Nitz, Austria, and John Hutchinson, Australia. Godfrey Bowen, New Zealand, probably the world's best known shearer at the time was fourth, another Australian, Steve Pittaway was fifth and Andrew Dodds of Scotland sixth. The team event was won by New Zealand."

Mr Walker then notes that Golden Shears Australia, formed in 1974, had not been invited to participate, the Australian team was instead nominated by the Royal Canberra Show. Later in 1977 preliminary discussions between Bath & West, Australia and Golden Shears New Zealand broached the need for a 'World Council', or 'Federation of Golden Shears' to administer future championships. "But it was not formalised then and the relationship continued on trust," he explained.

"After Masterton announced they would stage a Golden

Shears world championship in 1980 to celebrate their 20th jubilee, John Davis wrote to Colin [Gilmour-Wilson, Golden Shears New Zealand secretary] advising him Sir John Colfox, Bt., 'Tug' Wilson MBE and himself would be at Masterton for the championships to discuss formation of a World Federation." Several meetings were held, confirming recommendations that a Golden Shears World Council be established. These discussions culminated in a meeting of the 'Steering Committee' at Euroa after the 1980 Australian Golden Shears, formation of the Golden Shears World Council and the adoption of a Constitution which included Aims and Objectives.

"The meeting was chaired by Bob Chamberlain [Golden Shears Masterton]. Present were Laurie Keats and Allan Williams (Masterton), John Davis and 'Tug' Wilson (Bath & West) and Michael Tehan, Neville Stribling, David Rush and myself (Euroa). So, the foundation members of the new Golden Shears World Council were Golden Shears International Shearing Championships Society (New Zealand), Euroa Shearing Association Incorporated (Australia) [now Sport Shear Australia] and Royal Bath & West and Southern Counties Society (United Kingdom)."

A further thirteen countries have since been granted World Council membership – France, Germany, Isle of Man, Northern Ireland, Norway, Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, United States of America, Wales and, most recently (2026), the Falkland Islands and Basque Country. [Noted Spain has since withdrawn its membership.] Ray Davies of Wales was also accorded life membership at the 2026 meeting.

The following have served as Council officers since 1980:

Patron

RE Bob Chamberlain MBE (New Zealand) 1980 – 1987
Laurie Keats MNZM (New Zealand) 1988 –

Chairman

Laurie Keats MNZM (New Zealand) 1980 – 1988
Edwin O'Hara (New Zealand) 1988 – 2005
Lyle Rea (Northern Ireland) 2005 – 2012
Greg Herrick (New Zealand) 2012 – 2019
George Graham (Ireland) 2019 –

Secretary

Colin Gilmour-Wilson OBE (New Zealand) 1980 – 1992
John Davis MBE (England) 1992 – 1996
Wesley Wilton MBE (England) 1996 – 2003
Arthur Rundle (England) 2003 – 2017
Alan Derryman (England) 2017 –

Life Members (10)

Sir John Colfox, Bt. (UK) decd.
Ian McGregor (New Zealand) decd.
Colin Gilmour-Wilson (New Zealand) decd.
John Davis MBE (England) decd.
Wesley Wilton MBE (England) decd.
Laurie Keats MNZM (New Zealand)
Edwin O'Hara (New Zealand)
Bernie Walker OAM (Australia)
Bryan Williams (Wales)
Ray Davies (Wales)

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Above: Ireland's Golden Shears World Council chairman George Graham, pictured at the world championships in Masterton last month. **Opposite and below:** George Graham with Billy Codd, as they appeared in *Shearing* magazine 34 years ago (1992). Our story back then recorded: "Irish shearer George Graham from Enniscorthy is in New Zealand for the third time, making the journey because he "really loves shearing" and the training he gets here.

"Last year he set an Irish record shearing 404 Suffolk;Cheviot X Texel sheep under British Wool Marketing Board rules. The record of 358, set by Seamus Brannock, had stood for 16 years.

"In 1990, with Billy Codd, George set a two-stand record of 913 Suffolk cross ewes. 'Big sheep – bigger than in New Zealand,' he says.

At home, he works from a trailer, often visiting five or six farms a day. Here he has worked for Koro Mullins

and Graham Thompson at Dannevirke, and Peter Lyon, at Alexandra. In Ireland, he says, competitors may shear several different styles. It makes judging "interesting".

Clearly, the love for shearing expressed all those years ago has not diminished in the heart of George Graham and his contribution to the industry over more than 35 year has been immense. He was mightily involved in organising the highly successful world championships at Gorey in 1998, and again at the same town (different venue) in 2014. Re-elected for a third term as World Council chairman at Masterton, George took over the reins from New Zealand's Greg Herrick at the 2019 Council meeting in Le Dorat, France.

As well as a long history in shearer training in Ireland, George is a strong advocate for mental health and farm safety issues. Somebody give that man an emerald green medal!

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Top honours split at Golden Shears

By Doug Laing (*Shearing Sports NZ*) and Des Williams

In shearing sports terms, having the world championships and Golden Shears on at the same time at the same venue comes as close as one might ever get to having your cake and eating it too, as the old saying goes.

After the meagre pickings brought home from Le Dorat in 2019 and Royal Highland three years ago, New Zealand's hopes of regaining some machine-shearing supremacy lay in the home country advantage, on the home country sheep, and two shearers brim full of resolve.

One title each, many pundits were picking, including this magazine editor, who gave Jamie McKay of the Country Radio show his prediction that Rowland Smith would win the world title and Toa Henderson would hold onto the Golden Shears crown he won last year for the first time.

New Zealand's success in the world events proved to be unprecedented in the 26-year history since Bloemfontein in 2000, when teams blade shearing and woolhandling were added to the programme. Five wins from six events, with only the individual blades contest proving too elusive for our Dobbs and Oldfield. (See pages 50-55 for more extensive coverage of the world finals.)

And so it was, on an evening when black singlets, black T-shirts and red and purple ribbons mixed like streamers on election night, Northland shearer Toa Henderson successfully defended the Golden Shears Open shearing title, and Motueka-based Joel Henare, from Gisborne, won his 12th Golden Shears open woolhandling title, in an



Above: Echoes of 1974 and 1975 when [the late] Norm Blackwell became the first Northland shearer to win successive Golden Shears open titles. Toa Henderson from Kaiwaka repeats the feat in 2025 and 2026 and gives thanks to his support team for making it all possible. But Toa had the advantage in one respect – Norm famously observed that "Miss Golden Shears" had won more money for her success than he received for winning the open championship. Fortunately the Miss GS contest has long been consigned to history.

unbeaten sequence that started in 2013, spanning the two Golden Shears' that were cancelled in the Covid era.

After essentially blowing the 20-sheep world machine shearing final apart with his speed, and putting a sheep around everyone including early leader Gavin Mutch, Henderson may have known that Smith's quality might be good enough to bridge the gap created by a 35-second (1.75 points) time advantage. (As it later proved to be.)

In the Golden Shears Open final, Mutch again took the lead and held on to finish the 20 sheep first in just under 16 minutes, beating Henderson by 14 seconds. but Henderson had the better quality and was able to claim victory by about half a point.

New Zealand blades shearers Allan Oldfield and Tony Dobbs won the team title on Friday, but South Africa pair Rabela and Teboho Nyatsa attained revenge by finishing first and second respectively in the Golden Shears final.

In the Golden Shears open woolhandling individual final Henare had a ten-point advantage over Logan Kamura of Marton, whose second placing above Pagan Rimene and Keryn Herbert may have been a surprise to some.

Earlier in the day, Jack Fagan, of Te Kuiti, won the National Shearing Circuit final, after dominating the five preliminary rounds, which ended in him heading the 12 qualifiers for the semi-final earlier on Saturday.



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Three former winners were eliminated in the semi-final, but major threat and three-times winner Nathan Stratford remained, and led the chase.

Fagan finished in 17min 15.213sec, a time advantage of almost four points, which Stratford pegged back to some degree with the better quality, but Fagan still won by 1.378 points, to secure a place in the 2026-2027 New Zealand trans-Tasman shearing and woolhandling series team.

It was clearly a dream for Fagan to win the title ("I've been trying for 12

years, ever since I first went down to work for Peter Lyon at Alexandra"), with father Sir David Fagan having won nine times between 1986 and 2008.

In other Golden Shears shearing title finals Senior honours went to Taylor Tarrant, of Taumarunui, the new Intermediate champion is Joseph Scahill, of Ireland, the Junior title was won by Sreffan George, of Wales, and the Novice was won by Sam Lawson, of Ongaonga.

Lucy Elers, of Matura, retained the

Senior woolhandlig title, the Junior woolhandling winner was Leah Tamainu, of Nuhaka, and the Novice title was won by Isabelle Joiner, of Canada.

The North Island Woolhandling Circuit final was won by Ngaio Hanson, of Eketahuna, who thus retained her place in the trans-Tasman series team..

Jeremy Goodger of Masterton won the Golden Shears Men's woolpressing title for a 14th time, and the women's title was won for the first time by Mollie Moffett, of Fernhill, Hawke's Bay.



Above: Golden Shears Womens Invitation final. From left, Simon Goss, John Kirkpatrick (sponsor), Ngaio Hansen (with Ronnie Goss Memorial Trophy), Marika Braddick, Keryn Herbert, Vinniye Phillips, Raelene Kirkpatrick (sponsor).



Above: North Island Woolhandling Circuit finalists, from left: Simon Goss, John Kirkpatrick (sponsor), Ngaio Hansen (with Ronnie Goss Memorial Trophy), Marika Braddick, Keryn Herbert, Vinniye Phillips, Raelene Kirkpatrick (sponsor).

Golden Shears Results

Open final (20 sheep): Toa Henderson (Kaiwaka) 16m 13.228s, 56.111pts, 1; Gavin Mutch (Dannevirke) 15m 59.996s, 56.650pts, 2; Leon Samuels (Invercargill) 16m 18.999s, 57.300pts, 3; Hemi Braddick (Eketahuna) 16m 47.383s, 57.619pts, 4; Rowland Smith (Hastings) 17m 46.701s, 57.885pts, 5; Corey Palmer (Dipton) 17m 41.009s, 61.700pts, 6.

National Circuit Shearing Final (15 sheep – 3 merino, 3 corriedale, 3 crossbred long wool, 3 second-shear, 3 lambs): Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 17m 15.213s, 65.631pts, 1; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 18m 29.571s, 67.009pts, 2; Hugh De Lacy (Rangiora) 18m 38.815s, 68.341pts, 3; Justin Meikle (Oamaru) 18m 51.353s, 72.098pts, 4; Brook Hamerton (Hastings) 21m 01.431s, 75.132pts, 5; Lionel Taumata (Gore) 20m 50.185s, 76.439pts, 6.

Senior final (12 sheep): Taelor Tarrant (Taumarunui) 12m 25.546s, 49.027pts, 1; Dre Roberts (Mataura) 13m 01.429s, 49.231pts, 2; Kaivah Cooper (Napier) 13m 38.292s, 52.755pts, 3; Frazer Caldwell (Omagh) 13m 28.019s, 52.991pts, 4; Daniel Copley (ENG) 14m 00.809s, 53.120pts, 5; Callum Bosley (Cornwall) 13m 22.493s, 53.705pts, 6.

Intermediate final (8 sheep): Joseph Scahill (Mayo, Ireland) 10m 35.740s, 42.537pts, 1; Tamati Dennison (Kurow) 10m 51.350s, 42.938pts, 2; Mitchell Yates (Kimba, South Australia) 11m 04.900s, 43.365pts, 3; Tye Meikle (Oamaru) 10m 37.570s, 43.878pts, 4; Zakaia Lewis (Gisborne) 11m 00.710s, 44.656pts, 5; Michael Buick (Pongaroa) 11m 16.330s, 46.566pts, 6.

Junior final (5 sheep): Steffan George (Aberystwyth, Wales) 8m 43.333s, 33.367pts, 1; Sean Dunne (Wicklow, Ireland) 8m 38.211s, 33.511pts, 2; Ashlin Swann (Wairoa) 9m 26.154s, 34.908pts, 3; Mac Foreman (Pahiatua) 9m 14.877s, 34.944pts, 4; Phoebe Monk (Masterton) 8m 53.851s, 35.293pts, 5; Trent Alabaster (Taihape) 8m 27.713s, 35.586pts, 6.

Novice final (2 sheep): Samuel Lawson (Napier Boys High School) 4m 39.858s, 25.993pts, 1; Ngahuia Salmond (Te Kuiti) 4m 45.685s, 30.784pts, 2; Maia Buick (Masterton) 7m 51.067s, 31.053pts, 3; Lexi Young (Gisborne) 6m 46.494s, 31.825pts, 4; Tsenden-Ish Jargalsaikhan (Sukhbaatar, Mongolia) 6m 22.106s, 35.105pts, 5; Riley Priest (Upper Hutt) 6m 55.230s, 41.762pts, 6.

Womens Invitation Shearing Final (6 sheep): Laura Bradley (Woodville) 8m 03.351s, 32.668pts, 1; Pagan Rimene (Alexandra) 9m 07.208s, 34.700pts, 2; Emma Martin (Gore) 8m 47.807s, 35.220pts, 3; Kate Donald (Stirling) 8m 46.318s, 37.316pts, 4; Nicki Guttler (Lockhart) 9m 26.355s, 39.318pts, 5; Una Cameron (St Boswells) 8m 31.728s, 42.416pts, 6.

Golden Shears MKM Originals Student Challenge (two sheep): Napier Boys' High School No 1 Sam Lawson/Sam Whiteside) 23.93pts, 1; Lindisfarne College No 2 (Cooper Ellingham/Lachie Butler) 31.29pts, 2; Pukemiro (Oliver Selby/Riley Priest) 32.16pts, 3.

Open Speed Shear (1 sheep): Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 19.345s, 16.676pts, 1; Forde Alexander (Taumarunui) 20.611s, 2; Llyr Evans (Napier) 3; Paerata Abraham (Masterton) 4.

Senior Speed Shear (1 sheep): Cheyden Winiana (Nuhaka) 22.094s, 1; Randall Aranui (Martinborough) 24.365s, 2; Ryka Swann (Wairoa) 3; Dre Roberts (Mataura) 4.

Open Blade Shearing Final (5 sheep): Teboho Nyatsa (Rouxvill, South Africa) 12m 20.929s, 48.046pts, 1; Allan Oldfield (Geraldine) 12m 25.867s, 51.693pts, 2; Bonile Rabela (Sterkspruit, South Africa) 13m 10.256s, 52.513pts, 3; Tony Dobbs (Fairlie) 14m 32.382s, 55.619pts, 4; Andrew Mudge (Tavistock, England) 16m 09.883s, 61.294pts, 5; Mike McConnell (Timaru) 16m 30.071s, 67.904pts, 6.

Woolhandling

Open final (10 fleeces): Joel Henare (Gisborne) 122.893pts, 1; Logan Kamura (Marton) 133.447pts, 2; Pagan Rimene (Alexandra) 136.860pts, 3; Keryn Herbert (Te Kuiti) 140.999pts, 4.

Senior final (5 fleeces): Lucy Elers (Mataura) 132.419pts, 1; Tre Ratana-Sciascia (Taihape) 134.806pts, 2; Amy Bell (Dannevirke) 154.321pts, 3; Shyla Gordon (Masterton) 169.534pts, 4.

Junior final (4 fleeces): Leah Tamainu (Hastings) 107.363pts, 1; Waiari Puna (Napier) 117.670pts, 2; Opal Ramsay (Pongaroa) 138.670pts, 3; Caitlin Murphy (Pongaroa) 157.122pts, 4.

Novice final (2 fleeces): Isabelle Joiner (Calgary, Canada) 80.118pts, 1; Arcadia Jope (Eketahuna) 85.951pts, 2; Katie Huiti (Dannevirke) 88.461pts, 3; Roseen Crellin-Christian (Isle of Man) 121.844pts, 4.

North Island Woolhandling Open Circuit (6 fleeces): Ngaio Hanson (Eketahuna) 97.401pts, 1; Marika Braddick (Eketahuna) 102.004pts, 2; Keryn Herbert (Te Kuiti) 107.366pts, 3; Vinniye Phillips (Taumarunui) 132.759pts, 4.

Woolpressing

Golden Shears Men's Singles final: Jeremy Goodger (Masterton) 46.05pts, 1; Ricci Stevens (Napier) 48.35pts, 2.

Golden Shears Women's Singles final: Mollie Moffett (Hastings) 62.85pts, 1; Savvanah King (Eketahuna) 69.2pts, 2.

Golden Shears Pairs final: Jeremy Goodger and Conan Harmon (Masterton) 26.05pts, 1; Ricci and Angela Stevens (Napier) 37.5pts, 2.

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International flavour at Goldies

By Doug Laing (Shearing Sports NZ)

The international impact on the 2026 Golden Shears in Masterton arrived-big time nearing the end of the first of the four days on Wednesday when three lower grade titles were won by competitors from the Northern Hemisphere – even before the drawcard world championships had begun.

The triumphant visitors were Joseph Scahill, of Westport, Mayo, Ireland, and Welsh youngster Steffan George, from Aberystwyth, who won the Golden Shears Intermediate and Junior shearing finals respectively, and Isabelle Joiner, from Calgary, Canada, winner of the Novice woolhandling title, all entered as individuals and not members of national teams set to start their campaigns on Thursday.

In other finals on the first night, Napier Boys' High School pupil Sam Lawson won the Novice shearing title, the Junior woolhandling title was won by Leah Taimanu, from Nuhaka, and in the Senior woolhandling final 25-year-old Lucy Elers, of Matura, claimed the first South Island win by successfully defending a title she won last year, after winning the Junior title 12 months earlier.

It was particularly close for George, who won by just 0.144 points from runner-up and regular Junior finalist Sean Dunne, of Wicklow, Ireland.

The most ebullient was 24-year-old Joiner, who came to New Zealand nine months ago, having never heard of Golden Shears and on a mission to “immerse” herself in the industry as part of university study ambitions, specialising in natural fibres.

She googled “wool jobs” in New Zealand and arrived last May to start working in the South Island, and by October was competing, at Alexandra and Waimate, and finishing fifth on both occasions.

Heading home next week and hoping to return later in the year, Joiner is the first Golden Shears woolhandling champion from the Northern Hemisphere since Helen Bradley in 1995, and the second Canadian to win in either woolhandling or shearing at the Golden Shears, with Fiona Nettleton having won the Junior shearing title in 1988.



Above: Ireland's Joseph Scahill competing in the Golden Shears intermediate heats, from which he progressed to win the final. **Below left:** Isabelle Joiner from Calgary, Canada, Golden Shears novice woolhandling champion.

Of her first time at the Golden Shears, Joiner said: “I had never heard of it. My friend said ‘Izzy you want to have the full New Zealand experience, right? You have to come to Golden Shears... Actually, it's cheaper to just compete, I'll sign you up to compete!’

Scahill had been in good form in regional competitions leading-up to the Shears, and became only the second from the Republic of Ireland to win a Golden Shears title at Masterton in 64 years. The first was David Kingston, of Cork, in the Junior shearing final in 1998. Scahill, 21, won by 0.401 points from runner-up Tamati Dennison, of Kurow.



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Earlier, the Novice shearing had its own part in some history-making, with three girls among the six finalists, and one of the other three being the first Mongolian shearer to make a Golden Shears final, in Tsenden-Ish Jargalsaikhan, from Sukhbaatar (pictured above).

The title was won by Napier Boys' High School pupil Sam Lawson, a farmers' son from Ongaonga, making it a double for the day after featuring in his school's first Golden Shears Student Challenge victory.

He won by almost five points from runner-up Ngahuia Salmond, of Te Kuiti, heading the female trio who finished second, third and fourth.



Top: Golden Shears open finalists, from left: Sponsor, Toa Henderson, Gavin Mutch, Leon Samuels, Hemi Braddick, Rowland Smith, Corey Palmer. **Above:** Golden Shears open woolhanding finalists, from left: Sponsor, Joel Henare, Logan Kamura, Pagan Rimene, Keryn Herbert.



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I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones. (Albert Einstein)



Above: Bruce Christensen, long-serving Golden Shears committee member (and life member), the Alastair Simpson Memorial Trophy recipient for 2026.

Top: Golden Shears open blade shearing finalists, from left: Sponsor, Bonile Rabela, Allan Oldfield, Teboho Nyatsa, Tony Dobbs, Andrew Mudge and Mike McConnell. Above: PGG Wrightson Vetmed National Circuit finalists, from left: Sponsor, Jack Fagan, Nathan Stratford, Hugh De Lacy, Justin Meikle, Brook Hamerton, Lionel Taumata, Sponsor.

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Above: James Beech of Primary ITO arrives at Golden Shears with a van load of young shearers keen to do some sightseeing around Masterton at Goldies time. **Back left:** Jaylynn Richards, Nadia Stephenson, Isabella Douglas, Felicity Billington, Montague Knight, Andre Cawsey-Rickard, Tawhirimatea Paewai, James Beech, Kerehi Lilo-Pakai. In front: Nathan Gundry and Jason Gundry. **Below:** Jess Rose Toa from Rakaia landing what appears to be a seven-forty-seven at Golden Shears.



Microphone men at Golden Shears, **top down:** John McBride, Allan Oldfield (multi-tasking) and Tristan Mackay – just three of a larger, magnificent team.



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sHedway at the Goldies

By Jills Angus Burney

For the past five years the Golden Shears has promoted rural mental health in partnership with FMG Farmstrong, Wairarapa Rural Support and Wairarapa Changeability Counselling Services.

So, it was well in keeping with the Golden Shears kaupapa on wellness in the shearing industry, to welcome and host Australian Agri-Futures Rural Woman of the Year, nurse and mental health campaigner, Carol Mudford from Dubbo, New South Wales.

Carol Mudford is the founder and CEO of **sHedway**, an Australian national not-for-profit organisation dedicated to suicide prevention and mental health support within the shearing industry. Based at Dubbo, New South Wales, Mudford balances a unique dual career as both a professional shearer and a registered nurse.

Raised in a sheep and cropping family, she returned to the sheds during COVID, when a few weeks of wool handling turned into months – and eventually into shearing school and the past few years on the handpiece.

At the same time, Mudford moved into mental health nursing. In her first month, the shearing community lost three people to suicide, bringing the issue into sharp focus and inspiring her to act. With a “foot in both worlds,” she founded **sHedway**, a suicide-prevention and mental-health charity built from inside the shearing industry itself.

Mudford says she was so moved by the suicide of the three



Above: sHedway founder and CEO Carol Mudford (right) with world record holder Nicki Guttler, pictured at a Wairarapa shed while visiting New Zealand for the Golden Shears and world championships.

shearers that she took some time out from nursing to help set up her programme. Combining her passion for nursing with her life in the shearing industry, Mudford has created a unique path shaped by both care and community.

Today, **sHedway** is a registered health promotion charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission – built by shed people, for shed people – and running events and workshops across Australia.

The **sHedway** programme has moved with leaps and bounds and now has national recognition. In May 2025 Mudford was named the 2025 Agri-Futures Australia Rural Women’s Award national winner for her leadership in regional and rural wellbeing.

The mission of **sHedway**, which was launched in 2023, is a focus on providing mental health support to often “invisible” workers in shearing sheds across Australia.

The impact of **sHedway’s** operational reach is profound. As of late 2025, the organisation had delivered 42 events across every mainland Australian state, facilitating honest conversations and practical support for wool workers.

Mudford is no stranger to advocacy. She uses her platform to bridge the gap between healthcare and the rural workforce, often sharing her story through outlets like the OUTBACK podcast and to reach her woolshed audience, the programme is active on Facebook.

Her work is defined by the powerful message: “Keep Walking In. Keep Reaching Out.” Mudford has recruited several well-known names in the Australian industry to support her cause, including the world women’s eight-hour merino lambs record holder, Nicki Guttler of Lockhart, NSW.

In person, Carol is engaging and attentive. She’s a natural listener who says she enjoyed the conversations and korero with participants at the recent world championships at the Golden Shears in Masterton.

Mudford says she went to the ‘Worlds keen to hear what

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Depression Helpline (open 24/7) – 0800 111 757

Healthline (open 24/7) – 0800 611 116

Samaritans (open 24/7) – 0800 726 666

Suicide Crisis Helpline (open 24/7) – 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO). This is a service for people who may be thinking about suicide, or those who are concerned about family or friends.

Youthline (open 24/7) – 0800 376 633. You can also text 234 for free between 8am and midnight, or email talk@youthline.co.nz

0800 WHATSUP children’s helpline – phone 0800 9428 787 between 1pm and 10pm on weekdays and from 3pm to 10pm on weekends. Online chat is available from 7pm to 10pm every day at www.whatsup.co.nz.

Kidline (open 24/7) – 0800 543 754. This service is for children aged 5 to 18. Those who ring between 4pm and 9pm on weekdays will speak to a Kidline buddy. These are specially trained teenage telephone counsellors.

Your local Rural Support Trust – 0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP)

Alcohol Drug Helpline (open 24/7) – 0800 787 797. You can also text 8691 for free.

For further information, contact the Mental Health Foundation’s free Resource and Information Service (09 623 4812).

other people and countries are doing for suicide prevention and mental fitness in their sheds, and to share what her programme has been doing in Australia.

"What a week it's been, an amazing experience to be part of. Thank you to everyone involved for an incredible event, and also for welcoming sHedway."

Mudford says everywhere they travelled for the shearing shed family they were welcomed, and thanked, for openly talking about and doing something for suicide prevention in the shearing sheds.

"Every chat motivates and inspires us to keep going, so thank you to everyone that came and talked with us."

Amidst the current global chaos, Mudford said it felt like the best of humanity was on display in the Masterton stadium: despite language, race, culture and gender differences with teams from across the globe literally competing against each other, there was a strong display of genuine respect, support and united passion for each other, bonded by the work and sport of shearing and woolhandling. She says she was leaving with hope for the future of our sport and our industries, and for humanity!

sHedway reported they were also fortunate to join the Elite Wool Industry Training Pre-Shears Shearing School, and share a Toolbox Talk with both groups.

* * * * *

The Welsh equivalent of the NZ RURAL Support Trust and sHedway, is the DPJ Foundation (0800 587 4262) based in Pembrokeshire. British farming support is also through The Farmers Charity – RABI (0800 188 4444) and Farming Community Network/ Farmwell (030000 111 999).



Above: World record shearer Shane Ratima (left) turned commentator and stadium announcer chats to the victorious Napier Boys' High School students Sam Lawson and Sam Whiteside after their victory in the Golden Shears MKM Originals Student Challenge. (Photo: Pete Nikolaison.)





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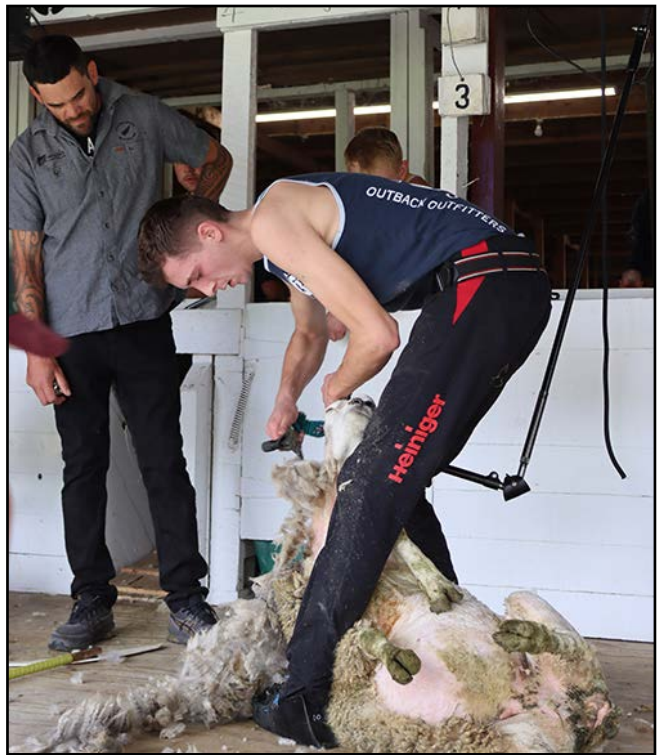
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Junior shearers at the Agrodome Shears on 6 December 2025. *Above left descending:* Deaken Mullins-Henry and judge Craig O'Brien; Ellah Harford and judge Graeme Roadley. *Above right:* Ilan Hughes and judge Richie Maguire; Kathryn Macpherson and Craig O'Brien.



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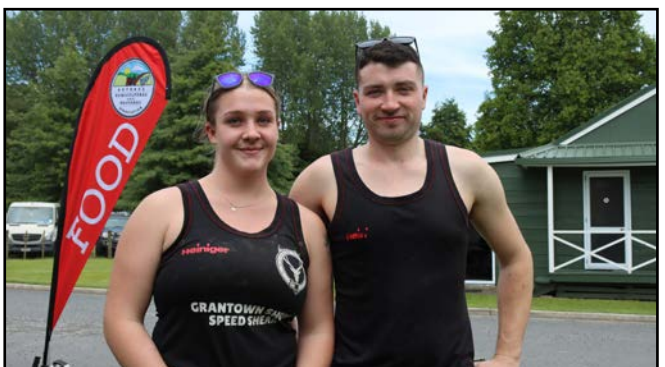
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Intermediate shearers at the Agrodome Shears on 6 December 2025. *Above left descending:* Steve Hakaraia; Kody Curry with Lionel Taumata in the pen. *Above right descending:* Marshall Buckman; Paddy Hudson with judge Richie Maguire.

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Faces from the Agrodome Shears, Rotorua: Lucas Broughton's decorated arm; Busy board; Keryn Herbert and Hine Thompson with famous friends, Silver Ferns Erena Mikaere, Erana's daughter and 'Sam' Winders; Kelly Barratt and Te Whetu Brown; visiting Scots, Kathryn Macpherson and Duncan Adams.

Digger doing it for Kyle

(By Doug Laing, *Shearing Sports NZ*)

Shearing veteran Digger Balme marked a 40th season in Open-class shearing by successfully defending the Agrodome Shears Open title at the Rotorua A&P Show on Saturday 6 December 2025.

Originally from Tahuna, north of Morrinsville, Balme was based in Tuakau, south of Pukekohe, when he entered the top class in the 1986-1987 summer and had his first Open win at Kaikohe that season.

Now long based near Otorohanga, in King Country, he last year clocked-up his own 60th year, and passed the handpiece over 13000 sheep, possibly the reason he's still capable of mixing it with the best, even sons of former competition shearing mates.

According to a former fellow finalist from the 1980s, Apiti shearing judge Russell Knight, who was also commentating on Saturday during Balme's absence from the microphone to shear the five-man final of 20 sheep each: "He's still shearing."

But for Balme (pictured below with Kyle at the New Zealand championships), it's more personal, knowing how much autistic son Kyle loves the shows, his heroes and the chance to get up on stage when Dad's collecting a ribbon.

"The biggest joy I get is taking Kyle," he said. "He also loves the people that look after him when I'm shearing, or on the microphone. When you see something like that it really touches your heart. I don't go to the shows to win."

But, long known for a tearaway approach, he held it together well on Stand One in the five-man final, as the focus seemed to be on whether Taumarunui shearer and 2024 Golden Shears and New Zealand Shears Senior champion Forde Alexander



at the other end of the board could claim his first Open win, in just his second season in the grade.

Shearing the 20 sheep in 18m 54.4s, Alexander was first to finish, beating Balme by just 3.1 seconds, but the veteran nailed it with the best quality points, including the judging in the pens, to beat Alexander by 2.895pts.

Third was Justin Meikle, of Oamaru, Gore-based Lionel Taumata, from Taumarunui, was fourth, and fifth was Piopio shearer James Ruki, who won the Rotorua Intermediate title in 1998, when Balme won the Open title for the first time.

Saturday's win started a scramble through the history books, with Shearing Sports New Zealand having maintained collated results nationally since only the 1992-1992 season, when shearing competitions emerged.



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But with some material available from previous years Balme has had at least 85 Open-class wins, in New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom, in an era when world and Golden Shears champions Sir David Fagan, Paul Avery, John Kirkpatrick and Rowland Smith have amassed well over 1000 wins between them.

Balme has reached nine Golden Shears Open finals, with a best of second place to 16-times winner Fagan in 1998, and having been in a New Zealand team to the United Kingdom in 1992, got closest to a world championships chance when third in 2003, falling short by just 0.65 points when the first two went through, and then won the World teams title in Scotland.

In 1999 Balme also set a world eight-hours strongwool lambs record of 621, during a three-stand record in a King Country shed, and has since become a "go-to" for crews at other record attempts, as venue commentator and presenter, including live-streaming from the Golden Shears, as well as becoming a certificated judge.

Napier shearer Kaivah Cooper continued a sequence of wins in his first season in the Senior grade, Meikle's son, Tye Meikle, won the Intermediate final, and the Junior final was won by young Irish shearer Sean Dunne, who was pen-boy for Balme in the Open final.

The Open woolhandling final was won by Vinniye Phillips, of Taumarunui, beating six-times Rotorua winner Keryn Herbert, of Te Kuiti. It was the first win of the season for Phillips, the 2024 Golden Shears senior champion who made an immediate impression last summer with three wins in the Open class, and fourth place in the Golden Shears Open final. Ana Braddick, of Eketahuna, was third, and Lucas Broughton, of Gisborne, was fourth.

The Senior woolhandling title was won by Te Whetu Brown, from Wairoa – her fourth win in the grade – and Paige Marshall, of Kihikihi, scored a second Rotorua Junior final win.

The show attracted 45 shearers (Open eight, Senior 11, Intermediate 14, Junior 12) and 27 woolhandlers (Open 11, Senior seven, Junior nine).

RESULTS: Agrodome Rotorua A&P shearing and woolhandling championships on Saturday, 6 December 2025: Shearing:

Open final (20 sheep): Digger Balme (Otorohanga) 18m 57.6s, 63.53pts, 1; Forde Alexander (Taumarunui) 18m 54.5s, 66.425pts, 2; Justin Meikle (Oamaru) 19m 24.6s, 66.48pts, 3; Lionel Taumata (Taumarunui/Gore) 20m 59.4s, 72.52pts, 4; James Ruki (Piopio) 21m 53.8s, 74.24pts, 5.

Senior final (12 sheep): Kaivah Cooper (Napier) 13m 52.3s, 51.4483pts, 1; Callum Bosley (England/Otorohanga) 14m 24.2s, 53.1267pts, 2; Ryka Swann (Wairoa) 14m 37s, 53.2667pts, 3; Emma Martin (Gore) 17m 26.7s, 58.5017pts, 4; Dalton Tangiwai (Pahiatua) 17m 51.9s, 59.9283pts, 5.

Intermediate final (8 sheep): Tye Meikle (Oamaru) 10m 0.9s, 36.795pts, 1; Marshall Buckman (Apiti) 10m 33.5s, 39.8pts, 2; Paddy Hudson (Hokonui) 10m 42.9s, 39.89.5s, 3; Sonya Fagan (Te Kuiti) 10m 58.2s, 42.91pts, 4; Riley Norman (Eketahuna) 12m 35s, 44.875pts, 5.

Junior final (5 sheep): Sean Dunne (Wicklow, Ireland) 9m 51.2s, 33.16pts, 1; Cam Henson (Woodville) 10m 49.9s, 39.895pts, 2; Chloe Bingham (Port Waikato) 11m 54.4s, 42.52pts, 3; Deakin Mullins-Henry (Dannevirke) 10m 48.6s, 43.83pts, 4; Ilan Hughes (Machynlleth, Wales) 11m 3.3s, 44.565pts, 5.

Woolhandling:

Open final: Vinniye Phillips (Taumarunui) 31.19pts, 1; Keryn Herbert (Te Kuiti) 34.606pts, 2; Anna Braddick (Eketahuna) 35.19pts, 3; Lucas Broughton (Gisborne) 78.938pts, 4.

Senior final: Te Whetu Brown (Wairoa/Napier) 52.03pts, Laura Bradley (Papatawa) 63.22pts, 2; Sonya Fagan (Te Kuiti) 63.97pts, 3; Emma Martin (Gore) 72.6pts, 4.

Junior final: Paige Marshall (Kihikihi) 41.66pts, 1; Chloe Bingham (Port Waikato) 42.76pts, 2; Miracle Waikato (Flaxmere) 43.48pts, 3; Zamal Ropiha (Hastings) 82.37pts, 4.



Above: Chloe Bingham of Port Waikato, was third in the junior shearing final at Agrodome Shears, Ngongotaha, and second in the junior woolhandling final.

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Above: Canadian sheep shearing icon Cliff Metheral was recently recognised as a "Pillar of the Sheep Industry" by the Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board at its symposium held in Regina. A familiar face in New Zealand and the shearing industry world-wide, Cliff has represented Canada at several world championships. He was here in New Zealand for the 'worlds' at Masterton in 1980 and again in 2012 and was shearer/team manager at Invercargill in 2017, together with his brother Donald. Cliff was also at Royal Bath & West in 1984 with Kenneth Pare as team mate; at Perth 1986 with Pieter De Mooy, then Gorey 1988 and Bjerkeim in 2008, on both occasions with Donald Metheral as teammate. Now 72, Cliff has another close connection with New Zealand. His daughter, Jennel McKenzie lives and farms at Clinton in South Otago with husband Ryan and their family. Apart from shearing sheep, Cliff's recreational interests (according to the 2017 world championships programme profile) include hunting, fishing, gardening, renovating and cutting firewood!



Above: Congratulations to our Aussie mate Steph Brooker-Jones from Lucindale, on her Career Legacy Award from Women in Wool for recognition of years of relentless hard-work in promotion of the wool industry (Posted by Raelene Laidlaw, Sport Shear Australia Association). And we agree, well deserved, Mrs B-J.

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Above: What started out as a nomination for life membership of Shearing Sports New Zealand instead became recognition of Phil O'Shaughnessy's service to shearing in the Northland region. Best known as shearing judge and commentator (at Golden Shears Masterton for more than 20 years, and at five world championships), Phil (**above**) received awards from the Northern Wairoa A&P Association at the Arapohue Show in February, and a Gold Medal from the Royal Agricultural Society. He started competing at competitions in 1966 when he moved to Masterton and worked for Graham Clegg. Those first forays included Golden Shears and Arapohue. He later served many years on the North Island and National Shearing Sports committees. (Note: Nominees for life membership of Shearing Sports New Zealand must first become a life member of the North or South Island committees of SSNZ.)



Above: The New Zealand Championships committee paid tribute to Rangi Roycroft, who has organised the competition in-house woolhandling team for the past 25 years. Vice president Alan MacDonald did the honours at Te Kuiti last week. **Below:** Te Hape Station manager Ian Valler organises the trucking and transport of sheep to and from the Les Munro Centre for the New Zealand championships. The New Zealand championships committee recognised Ian's service in this vital task by presenting him with the Keith and Maureen Wilkie Memorial Award. Te Hape B and Tiroa E Trusts are long-time suppliers of sheep for the championships. Congratulations, Rangi and Ian!

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An EWIT training group at Masterton before Golden Shears. **Left side of the Elite banner** – Back left: Denis O'Sullivan (Eire), Adam Killeen (Eire), Josef Winders, Christian Zill (Germany). Front left: Tom Wilson (EWIT), Jack Fagan, Kingston Pue, Peter Hogarth (Scotland), Cleveland Pue. **Right side of banner, back left:** Jadas Guelfi, Lucas Marsden, Felix Riedel (Germany), Julian Karl (Germany). Front left: Joseph Scahill (Eire), Nele Deufel (Germany), Nicki Guttler (Australia/sHedway), Carol Mudford (Australia/sHedway). (O'Sullivan finished sixth in the world championship final.) **Below:** Young Masterton lads wagging school to attend Golden Shears, all stickered up with 'hipi' from MPI, tried teaching the editor to read their hand sign language. Four fingers pointing down means 'horse', apparently. (We got that okay!)





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RICHARD LINDZEN



Cam Griffiths looking for 50 years

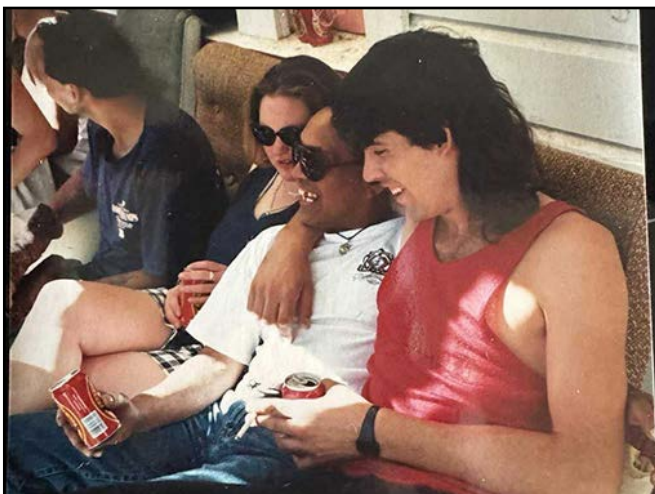
It's more than 30 years since Australian 'gun' Cameron (Cam) Griffiths came across the Tasman (no, it's not a ditch!) in search of some action at the 1995 New Zealand Merino Shears, Alexandra. He didn't make the final but he wasn't far away, finishing eighth in the semifinals. No disgrace when those ahead of you are named Mana Te Whata, Kevin Walsh, Ian Wratten, Atawhai Hauraki, Grant Smith and Barry Taylor! (Wratten also being an Aussie, of course, and winner of the NZ Merino Shears in 1991.)

Wratten and Griffiths then teamed up to represent Australia in a "World Teams Challenge" against New Zealand (Te Whata and John Emslie) and South Africa (Piet Tenteng and Charles August). They finished three points behind New Zealand and 18 points ahead of South Africa.

Cam recently posted on Facebook about competing at the Warwick Show, his first competitive outing for about three years. "I came away with two blue ribbons and one red, finishing first in the Local, second in the Over 50s and first in the Warwick teams event. I also judged the novice and senior shearers so it was a great day all round."

Cam's first open class win was at Inverell in 1988, where he won the Sapphire Shears. He won there again in 1993. He's won more than 30 open competitions in his career and appeared in some 170 open finals. 1995 was also the year he won the Australian Fine Wool open championship at Tenterfield and the Diamond Shears at Longreach.

"I still enjoy shearing, it gets in your blood, May of this year will mark 48 years on the tube (as the saying goes) for me and I'm now determined to determined to make it 50 years in the Industry."



Top: Mouse Gamble, Oti Mason, Sarah Cowper, Pat Solomon at the old Paewai Mullins shearing quarters at 10 Victoria Ave in Dannevirke. Photo would've been taken around 1995.
Above: Jared Mullins back stand with Punga Paewai doing the wool. On the Front Stand is Hamish de Lautour from Te Whangai Romney Stud, also a director on the board for Wools of New Zealand, and a sponsor of the Dannevirke Shearing Show, Pahiatua Shearing Competition, The Golden Shears in Masterton and also a sponsor at The New Zealand Shearing Championships in Te Kuiti. He is heavily involved in the competitions as he can see the advantages it has when it comes back to the beautiful fibre and the preparation that it deserves in the woolsheds. (From Tuma Mullins)



Top: Cam Griffiths competing at Alexandra's New Zealand Merino Shears in 1995. **Above:** Terry O'Leary, Cam Griffiths, Cameron Foat, Brook Whyman at Warwick, 2026.

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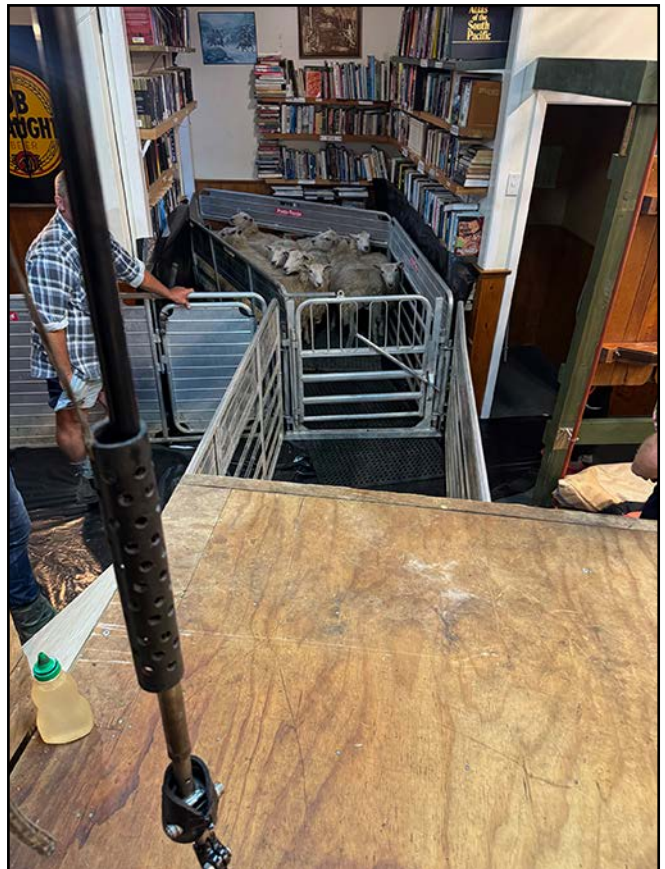
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Above and opposite: Past the books then straight ahead to the shearing board. Something slightly different for the speed shear at Ohura, gaining access via the Ohura Cosmopolitan Club Library. We wonder, did they pass 'Sheep O!', 'Shear Hard Work' or 'Last Side to Glory' on those shelves, en route to their 20-second trim? (Photos from Sir David Fagan.)



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It takes two years to learn to speak and sixty years to learn how to keep quiet. (Ernest Hemingway)

Westwood Farm – more than meets the eye

By Des Williams

One might assume that a recent Facebook posting about the completion of main shear at 'Westwood Farm' in Western Southland would draw no more than passing interest from casual readers or browsers. Just another shed done for the year, another one down the road to go to ... hopefully.

But 'Westwood' is not just another farm to those who know something of their Southland history. It was the first farm settled west of the wildly turbulent Waiau River that flowed from Lake Te Anau to the sea at Te Waewae Bay. The river that once provided a significant physical barrier to New Zealand's final frontier.

'Wildly turbulent Waiau River'? Well, it was back when pioneering Irishman Hugh Erskine bought his farm at the mouth of the river back in 1885. (The Manapouri Hydro Dam removed much of the wild turbulence back in the 1970s!) A farm that remains in the Erskine family to this day, 140 years after Hugh and his new wife, Agnes Mary Armstrong, first set foot on their bush-clad river flats.

Hugh Erskine was born (1859) into a dairy farming family in County Down, Ireland, one of nine sons and two daughters raised by William and Mrs Erskine. Tragedy struck the Erskine farm, family and district in the late 1870s when a disease known as ringerpest wiped out the district's dairy herds. At the age of 21, Hugh then decided it was time to 'emigrate' and he with a friend boarded the sailing vessel "Durham", bound for New Zealand. Departing on 25 June 1880, Hugh and his friend (who had previously been to New Zealand) berthed at Port Chalmers in October.

Hugh spent a couple of years working at various places and occupations, all the while saving money to bring his fiancé (Agnes) to New Zealand – rabbiting being one of the more lucrative sources of money at the time. The couple were married in June 1883, a week after Agnes arrived in the country, (Agnes lied about her age in order to leave Ireland before she was 21) and lived for a year in the Waitepeka district, near Balclutha.



Above: Original sheep yards at Westwood Farm. (Erskine family photo archives.)

By now 24 years old, Hugh acquired by auction a 'depasturing licence' for an area of 3200 acres on the slopes of the Princess Range – beyond the Hump Ridge. He had not seen the land before-hand but it was described with glowing terms in the newspaper. A physical inspection of the block soon convinced Hugh that farming it would be impractical so he surrendered his lease and obtained in its place the rights to a heavily forested block on the west bank of the Waiau River.

By 1885 Hugh, Agnes and their infant son William were settling into the task of establishing a home and making a living from the land. Hugh first constructed a whare from flax on a little clearing and later, with timber felled on the property and slabs from a sawmill at Colac Bay, he constructed the first homestead on 'Westwood'. The farm was held on lease until 1893 when the Erskines were able to purchase the freehold title. The first homestead burned down in the early 1890s and was replaced by the existing homestead in 1895. By this time, other families were settling on land 'west of the Waiau' and the settlement of Papatotara was growing. (The 1895 building was also lost to fire, in 2015.)



Above: Original Papatotara settler, Hugh Erskine, pictured outside the building that served as stables on one side and shearing shed on the other, circa 1905. (Erskine family photo archives.)



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Top and above: Westwood Farm sheep on the way to the shed for shearing by Waiiau Valley Shearing Ltd (Simon De Vries), January 2026.

Top: Earlier days of shearing at Westwood Farm. Cecil Ferguson and Les Bevin doing the mahi in the 'old shed' while Ben Erskine takes care of the wool, c1970. **Above:** David Erskine tramps the wool into the press that was run by the Case D tractor parked outside to work the hydraulics on the press. (Erskine family photo archives.)



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The job of clearing the property for stock was ongoing for many years – the *Western Star* newspaper on 7 November 1902 reported Erskine had “felled fully 100 acres” during a busy bush-felling season. The task of getting stock across the Waiiau River to raise on the land provided challenges that can hardly be imagined today. No 18-wheelers rolling across the bridge and down Papatotara Road back then. Erskine family history describes how Hugh bought some cattle at Otautau – the land was still too rough to carry sheep – but couldn’t get the animals to enter the fast-flowing water. Instead, he had to tow each animal across one by one, with his rowing boat!

As well as the challenges imposed by the natural environment, Hugh and Agnes Erskine had the extreme misfortune to see four of their nine children die from an influenza epidemic in 1907 – three in their teens and the youngest at just 15 months.

Two others, Ralph and Ebenezer (Ben) survived to adulthood and later played parts in running Westwood – Ralph and Ben Erskine were there in the early 1960s when this writer’s brother was employed as a farm labourer. Ben Erskine’s son David then took over the reins and today the fourth generation Erskines – Quinton, Eric and Anita – sons and daughter of David Erskine, are proprietors of Westwood Farm.



Waiau Valley Shearing Ltd's crew hard at work in the Westwood shed at Papatotara, Western Southland.



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The property of some 1123 acres (995 acres freehold and 128 leased) carries romney sheep and some 'coloured' breeds and shorthorn cattle (Westwood Stud Shorthorns). The farm was recognised by the New Zealand Century Farms organisation in 2017, recognising the historical significant of properties that have been farmed for 100 years or more.

From Erskine family history: "after a hard, but successful life, Hugh died on 31 July 1932 after a short illness of cancer in his throat, at the age of sixty-three. His wife Agnes, Bill, Elizabeth, Ralph and Ebenezer (Ben), were still alive when Hugh died. Agnes died about twenty years later [1951]. Ebenezer 'Ben' was the last surviving of the siblings. Agnes, Hugh's wife, was a capable woman and was a great help to Hugh in the pioneering days."

* * * * *

Hugh Erskine was instrumental in achieving many 'milestones' for the district – establishing the first school in a room at his homestead and employing the first teacher (Miss Fanny Nickless); he played an important role in getting the railway line extended from Orepuki to Tuatapere; led initiatives for the construction of the first bridge across the Waiau River at Tuatapere (opened on St Patrick's Day 1915) and construction of saleyards in the town. He also bought kilts for, and financed the Tuatapere Pipe Band which served the district at every public occasion for many years. Mrs Erskine ran the first post office from the Erskine homestead.

The Erskine family held a three-day reunion in 1985 to mark the centennial of Hugh and Agnes arriving in the Papatotara district. About 250 descendants of William Erskine from County Down attended. Anita Erskine notes that the 150th anniversary is not that far away ...

So, Westwood Farm and the Erskine family – after four generations and the fifth looming large – not just another shearing shed down another country road!

Refs: *Central & Western Murihiku Archive*; *Papatotara From Bush to Pasture* by Mark Hanger, 1981; *The Hole in the Bush* by Des Williams, 2009; *Anita Erskine personal comments*.



Top descending: Waiau Valley Shearing Ltd's crew hard at work; Quinton Erskine and daughter Courtney (5th generation) skirting wool; Jordan Erskine (5th generation) emulating grandfather David in the press; sheep shorn ready to start growing next year's fleece. (Erskine family photo archives.)

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Three-stand lamb shearing record smashed

A gang of New Zealand shearers smashed a three-stand world record by almost 100 lambs in a remote West Otago woolshed on Saturday 31 January 2026. The record took place at Wohelo Station, Moa Flat, south of Roxburgh, where Leon Samuels, of Roxburgh, Paerata Abraham, of Masterton, and Shane Ratima, of Hunterville, were chasing a three-stand, eight-hours, strong wool lambs record of 1976 set by King Country shearers Kaleb Foote, Cole L'Huillier and Daniel Langlands near Piopio in December 2019.

Starting at 7am and facing four two-hour runs, the targets grew as the tallies grew, the record was passed with more than 20 minutes to go, and the trio, all right-handers, finished with 2073, led by former Golden Shears Open champion Samuels who passed 700 for the day barely a minute before the clock ticked past the 5pm finish.

Samuels finished with 702, Abraham 692 and Ratima, shearing throughout with a heavily bandaged left forearm, finished with 679, after eight collectively were rejected by the six World Sheep Shearing Records Society referees.

The shearers, put together totalled 516 in the first run from 7am to 9am, 720 in the run to lunch at 11.30am, 217 in the first run after lunch, and 520 in the run to knock-off, in which Samuels sheared the best personal run of the day with 181.

It was his third record-breaking success, being a holder of the four-stand record of 2556, in which he sheared 648 in Southland in 2013, and a former holder of a solo strong wool ewes record shorn in 2017.

Abraham was involved in an unsuccessful two-stand lambs record attempt east of Masterton in December 2024 and Ratima was involved in an unsuccessful attempt on the three-stand record eight days later near Hunterville.

It was the third of three record attempts in New Zealand this summer, all successful.

On January 5, Whanganui shearer Simon Goss beat the nine-hours strong wool ewes record by one with a new tally of 732, at Te Pa in the central North Island, and on January 20 Te Atakura Crawford, Ariana Te Whata, Pagan Rimene and Rose Lewis established a women's four-stand eight-hours strong wool lambs record of 1938, at Melrose, near Owaka, South Otago. (Doug Laing)



Above: One minute to go! A screenshot from the live-stream of the three-stand lamb shearing record set at Wohelo Station, Central Otago on 31 January 2026. A busy day! Next page: More images by Charly Harvey.



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*The record-setting day at Wohelo Station. **Below:** Tane Toa, Leon Samuels, Shane Ratima and Paerata Abraham receive their certificates from convening judge, Barry Hammonds. **Bottom:** Wahine Toa, Ngawai Samuels, Cushla Abraham and Erin Wirihana looking pleased with the day's outcome. (Charly Harvey images).*



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Tribute: Oti Mason, Master Woolhandler



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Shearing Sports New Zealand expresses sympathies and condolences to the whānau of Master Woolhandler and two-times Golden Shears Open woolhandling champion Oti Mason, who died at Dannevirke on 24 February 2026.

Oti was at the forefront of competition during the expansion of woolhandling in the 1980s, and was third in the second Golden Shears Open final in 1986. It was the first of his eight appearances in the final, through his wins in 1996 and 2000 to his last in 2004, when he was runner-up, as he had also been when defending the title in 1997.

In 1996 he also won the North Island circuit final on the Golden Shears stages, and he was acclaimed a Master Woolhandler in the same year.

In 1998, Oti was runner-up to Joanne Kumeroa in a World Championships team selection series final at the Golden Shears and headed to Ireland where he was again runner-up to Kumeroa in the All-Ireland woolhandling at Gorey, and third in the world championship final won by Welsh woolhandler Angharad Mair Lewis, whom he had mentored and trained in New Zealand.

In 2000 Oti won his second Golden Shears Open in Masterton, having been in just one other final during the season. He kept competing, and won twice in the following season, at the Hawke's Bay and Manawatu shows, once in 2001-2002 (Poverty Bay), once in 2002-2003 (Hawke's Bay), and twice in 2003-2004 (Hawke's Bay, Western Shears Raglan) when, as well as being second at the Golden Shears, he was fifth at the New Zealand championships in Te Kuiti, and was third in the national rankings.

In 2004-2005 he had one win (Hawke's Bay), and his last Open win was at the Poverty Bay A&P show in Gisborne in 2008, when second and third places went to eventual two-times world individual champion Joel Henare and 2010 world teams champion Keryn Herbert.

Oti became a qualified and active judge, but dabbled still in the occasional competition, in 2018 being fourth in a Veterans woolhandling event at the Golden Shears. *(By Doug Laing)*

Photo Gallery, left descending: Joanne Kumeroa and Oti Mason, New Zealand team mates at the world championships in Ireland, 1998; Oti at the board during the world championship heats, 'on a roll' with his full wool fleece; with Angharad Mair Lewis (Wales) and Craig Rowsell (Australia) on the podium after the world championship final. **Below:** Oti receiving his Master Woolhandler trophy from Shearing Sports NZ chairman Tony Brennan in 1996.



New Zealand secures Trans-Tas honours

By Doug Laing (Shearing Sports NZ)

It was payback time for the Black Singlets in the trans-Tasman shearing test held at Gore's Southern Shears in February. With a change of venue forced by the busy programme at Golden Shears to accommodate the world championships, New Zealand reclaimed the trans-Tasman bragging rights with a win by almost six points over pre-post TAB favourites Australia. It proved to be a memorable occasion, coinciding with the 60th anniversary of the Southern Shears shearing and woolhandling championships.

Australia had won the three-most recent tests, in West Australia in October 2024, Masterton in March last year and South Australia four months ago, and had won 15 of the last 20 home-and-away matches since 2014.

New Zealand had the experience all-round, with Pongaroa shearer David Buick teaming with the South Island pair of Angus Moore, of Seddon, and merino/fine wool specialist Chris Vickers, of Shag Point, North Otago.

Australia had series legend Daniel McIntyre, from Glen Innes, NSW, with 17 wins in 22 trans-Tasman tests behind him, but two new teammates in Sam Bacon, of Jamestown, South Australia, and Sam Byers, of Ross, Tasmania.

The star of the night was Moore, who shored the six merino ewes, three long-wooled strong wool ewes and three second-shears in 15min 3.44sec, almost 1min 24sec quicker than next-man-off McIntyre.

Moore also had the second-best overall quality points, to claim individual honours by just over seven points from teammate Buick, who had the best quality points, including the best pen, and was second-to-last on time.

Vickers was last to finish in 17min 40.34sec, and had special reason for celebrating, after being on the losing end in all his three previous tests. It completed a cleansweep of three home trans-Tasman tests for the Shearing Sports New Zealand teams, following a blades win in Waimate in October and a woolhandling win at the Otago Shears last week. (See page 41)

In other major events at Gore, New Zealand's hopes for



Above: *The Leaning Tower of Woodville, aka Mr Gordon 'Flash' Duxfield and his winning team of shearers – Chris Vickers, Angus Moore and David Buick. Their success halted a recent trend of Australian shearing victories. Quite a flash result!*

the 20th Golden Shears World Championships in Masterton on March 4-7 soared when championships team members claimed the two major Southern Shears titles.

Reigning Golden Shears and New Zealand Shears champion Toa Henderson, from Northland, won the open shearing final, and Joel Henare, of Motueka, claimed the Open woolhandling title, the 150th Open win of his career.

Leon Samuels, of Roxburgh, won the South Island Shearer of the Year final, and a North Island team of Buick, Jack Fagan and John Kirkpatrick won the South Island leg of an annual two-match inter-island shearing challenge.

The anniversary was a huge success for Southern Shears with 219 entries, including numerous shearers and woolhandlers from overseas ahead of the World championships. This was most apparent in the Junior shearing final, with five of the six being from the Northern Hemisphere, including winner Tane Maguire, from Wales.

The competitors comprised 140 shearers (Open 49, Senior 31, Intermediate 22, Junior 24, Novice 14) and 79 woolhandling entries (Open 37, Senior 15, Junior 28, Novice 9).



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Results: 60th Anniversary Southern Shears 20-21 February 2026:

Trans-Tasman Shearing Test (12 sheep: 6 merino ewes, 2 long strong wool, 3 second-shear): New Zealand (Angus Moore 15m 3.44s, 60.0053pts; David Buick 17m 27.37s, 67.0352pts; Chris Vickers 17m 40.34s, 75.9337pts) 202.9742pts beat Australia (Daniel McIntyre 16m 27.37s, 67.4515pts; Sam Byers 16m 58.88s, 68.6107pts; Sam Bacon 17m 18.09s, 72.7378pts) 208.8pts.

Inter-Island shearing (15 sheep): North Island (Jack Fagan 14m 3.02s, 50.0177pts; John Kirkpatrick 15m 1.81s, 51.4238pts; David Buick 15m 12.07s, 53.2035pts) 154.645pts, beat South Island (Corey Palmer 15m 7.5s, 51.9083pts; Casey Bailey 15m 30.94s, 52.4137pts; Angus Moore 14m 33.34s, 53.5337pts) 157.8557pts.

Southern Shears Open final: (20 sheep): Toa Henderson (Kaiwaka) 17m 14.44s, 57.122pts, 1; Leon Samuels (Roxburgh) 17m 24.07s, 58.8535pts, 2; Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 17m 15.57s, 59.3285pts, 3; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 18m 25.56s, 60.178pts, 4; Casey Bailey (Riverton) 18m 50.84s, 60.492pts, 5; John Kirkpatrick (Pakipaki) 18m 46.97s, 61.4985pts, 6.

South Island Shearer of the Year final (20 sheep): Leon Samuels (Roxburgh) 17m 45.12s, 61.156pts, 1; Toa Henderson (Kaiwaka) 17m 41.21s, 61.2105pts, 2; David Buick (Pongaroa) 18m 30.15s, 62.5575pts, 3; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 19m 14.09s, 62.7045pts, 4; Casey Bailey (Riverton) 19m 24.97s, 63.4485pts, 5; Angus Moore (Seddon) 17m 42.47s, 64.1235pts, 6.

Southern Shears Senior final (12 sheep): Dre Roberts (Mataura) 13m 40.15s, 47.1742pts, 1; Cody Waihape (Gore) 13m 40.12s, 48.8393pts, 2; Keahrey Manson (Piopio) 14m 8.18s, 50.659pts, 3; Richard Lancaster (Clitheroe, England) 14m 41.5s, 50.9917pts, 4; James Wilson (Winton) 16m 28.35s, 50.0008pts, 5; Jimmy Napier (Gore) 17m 46.54s, 59.827pts, 6.

Southern Shears Intermediate final (6 sheep): Tye Meikle (Oamaru) 8m 7.04s, 28.852pts, 1; Michel Buick (Pongaroa) 8m 11.44s, 31.7387pts, 2; Mitchell Yates (Kimba, South Australia) 8m 45.9s, 32.295pts, 3; Joseph Scahill (Mayo, Ireland) 7m 38.34s, 32.5837pts, 4; Conor Wilkinson

(Wyndham) 9m 27.06s, 36.353prs, 5; Paddy Hudson (Hokonui) 8m 13.41s, 39.6705pts, 6.

Southern Shears Junior final (4 sheep): Tane Maguire (Powys, Wales) 7m 49.38s, 33.469pts, 1; Sean Dunne (Wicklow, Ireland) 7m 42.47s, 34.3735pts, 2; Reuben Wilkinson (Wyndham) 7m 40.04s, 35.752pts, 3; Jess Parkhouse (Devon, England) 9m 14.47s, 37.4735pts, 4; James Hopkins (Westport, Ireland) 10m 7.66s, 37.883pts, 5; Maureen Cadet (Brittany, France) 9m 45.93s, 42.7695pts, 6.

Southern Shears Novice (1 sheep): Charis Morrell (Alexandra) 3m 45.31s, 18.27pts, 1; Dylan Holland (Gore) 4m 53.16s, 18.66pts, 2; Brooklyn Frazer (Invercargill) 3m 47.75s, 20.39pts, 3; Jake Anderson (Taihape) 4m 18.85s, 20.94pts, 4; Ffion Haf Jones (Corwen, Wales) 4m 26.19s, 21.31pts, 5; Noah Monson (Methven) 5m 6.53s, 24.33pts, 6.

Woolhandling

Southern Shears Open final: Joel Henare (Gisborne/Motueka) 131.318pts, 1; Pagan Rimene (Alexandra) 190.5pts, 2; Vinniye Phillips (Taumarunui) 225.08pts, 3; Foonie Waihape (Alexandra) 4.

Southern Shears Senior final: Tre Sciascia (Taihape) 108.832pts, 1; Lucy Elers (Mataura) 113.844pts, 2; Ashley Clarke (Gore) 117.27pts, 3; Terri Lee Walker (Taihape) 148.818pts, 4.

Southern Shears Junior final: Shahni Whitu (Roxburgh) 96.594pts, 1; Mady Little (Alexandra) 110.096pts, 2; Brooklyn Frazer (Invercargill) 113.95pts, 3; Peighton Kimura-Boyes (Gore) 117.05pts, 4.

Southern Shears Novice: Jayda White (Milton) 56.562pts, 1; Law Kawenga (Mataura) 82.75pts, 2; Sophie Newby (Gore) 86.57pts, 3; Maureen Cadet (Brittany, France) 89.81pts, 4.



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Above: England's Jess Parkhouse was fourth in the Southern Shears junior shearing final before representing her country in the world woolhandling at Masterton, finishing in 11th place.



New Zealand wins trans-Tasman woolhandling: New Zealand scored a comfortable win over Australia in a trans-Tasman woolhandling test match held in South Otago. The New Zealand team of Golden Shears champion Joel Henare, of Motueka, and Ngaio Hanson, of Eketahuna, won by more than 75 points from Australians Alexander Schoff, of Chinchilla, Queensland, and Racheal Hutchinson, of Gilgandra, NSW. (125.068pts to 200.388pts.)

The match took place on the first day of the 2026 Otago Shears at Carterhope Estate, Te Houka, and enabled New Zealand to square the 2025-2026 series, with Australia having won the first leg during the Australian National Shearing and Woolhandling Championships at Jamestown, South Australia, in October.

It was the 51st trans-Tasman woolhandling test since the annual home-and-away series started in 1998, with New Zealand having 38 wins. Henare, 34, extended his record as the most successful individual, with 16 appearances,

including 14 wins, and Hutchinson as Australia's most successful made her 13th appearance, including nine wins, but it was her first appearance with Schoff, who was contesting a fifth trans-Tasman test in a row.

Above: New Zealand team manager Gordon 'Flash' Duxfield, New Zealand judge Ida Ratima, Ngaio Hansen, Joel Henare, Alexander Schoff, Racheal Hutchinson and Australian team manager Claire Lowe. **Below:** Henare and Hanson. (Barbara Newton photo.)



"I did my first 400, 500 and 600 all within about five weeks. Then I'd hear that David Fagan had done some other big tally and I knew I'd have to have a go at beating that too. That's the only way you can motivate yourself – set those high goals and go after them." (Alan MacDonald, Gone West for the Shearing, 1993.)



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Remembering Robin Middleton

Robin Alexander James Middleton (1940-2011) **pictured opposite** was a New Zealand Wool Board instructor for some 15 years, based at Palmerston North, before becoming a Heiniger rep towards the end of 1997. Originally a Cantabrian, Robin told *Shearing* in a March 1998 interview he'd been introduced to the shearing industry at an early age.

"I came from a shearing family and used to watch my uncles at work, but they didn't let me watch for too long. 'Come on, grab a handpiece, you can't just sit there on your bum all day!'

Years of shearing and contracting around Canterbury followed, eventually leading to his appointment as a provincial instructor. A three-year 'apprenticeship' then led to a full time position and the move to Palmerston North.

Robin reckoned he could have written a book about his time with WoNZ around the middle and East Coast regions of the North Island. He thought there must be 50 ways of saying "Oh yeah."

Move your right foot back a bit.

"Oh, yeah?"

Not that right foot, your other right foot.

"Oh, yeah!"

Move the sheep this way.

"Oh yeah."

A bit more.

"Ooohh, yeahh!"

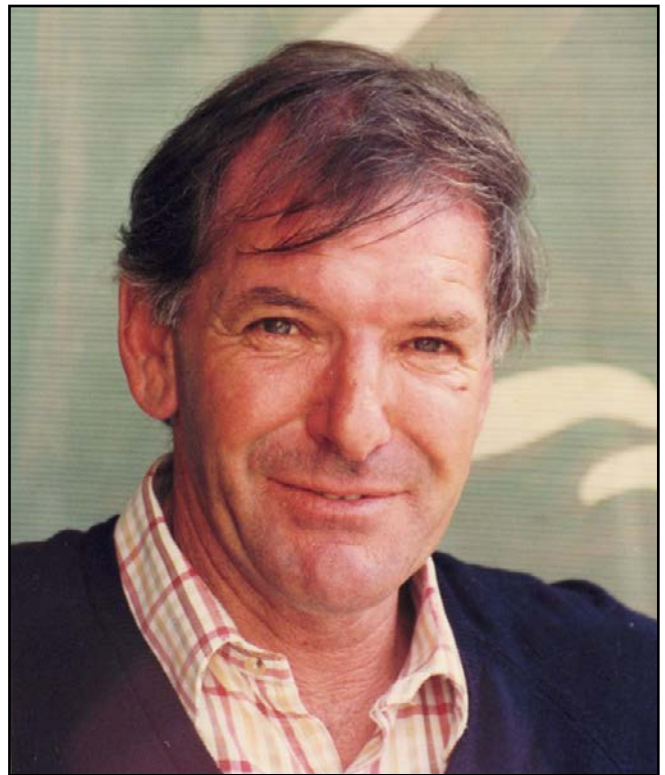
Keep that bottom tooth down on the skin.

"Oh ... yeah!"

Robin also recalled with some mirth a learners' course (location not revealed) where one slightly-built youngster believed everything he was told as Gospel. "Robin said you do it like this so it must be true."

At the other end of the scale was a really big chap who though he already knew everything because he'd been told a few things by his mates.

"He reckoned he'd come on the course to shear sheep and wasn't taking any notice of an instructor who insisted he share his stand and help with the woolhandling and woolpressing, as the other learners were expected to do.



"Pretty soon it came to a confrontation – this big bloke standing up on the raised board, looking down on me. I asked him again to give up his stand and to let someone else have a go and he started to get a bit heavy. I thought I was in trouble because the whole course would have been history if I'd backed down.

Next minute the skinny little bloke was standing beside me with a fence batten in each hand. 'You hit him around the knees and I'll whack him on the back of the neck,' he whispered to me.

"Fortunately the big fellow saw some sense, we went outside to talk things over and when I suggested he leave the course, he agreed to go.

"It was always a great challenge, getting to know the individuals on courses for the first time and trying to balance my attention between the faster and slower learners."

In tribute to Rob following his death on 19 June 2011, NZWB Field Director Robin Kidd recalled a time when the youngsters on a course were just too generous in their appreciation of the instructor's efforts.

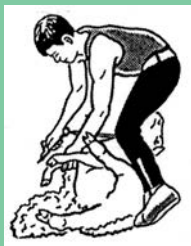
"As a shearer, and particularly as a shearing instructor, Robin Middleton had a rare talent. Always a gentleman, well spoken and with an engaging personality, he not only managed to teach one of agriculture's greatest skills, but he also left his pupils feeling that he was their personal mentor.

"Sometimes, the boys' appreciation was expressed in a material form. Once as he was leaving a large group of devoted young shearers up the coast, north of Gisborne, one of them leaned in the window and told him that they had put a wee "thank you" in the boot of the car. The "thank you" gesture turned out to be a bag of New Zealand Green (cannabis). Robin had some very anxious hours, until he later managed to jettison the "thank you" parcel under one of the bridges on the way home!"

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Shearing magazine's New Zealand Shearing & Wool Industry Hall of Fame

Subjective category: By reputation and deeds, their names endure through New Zealand's shearing industry history and folklore:

- James Apes (1855-1938)
- Alex Hutchinson (1865-1943)
- Rimitiri Raihania (1868-1934)
- Jimmy Power (1869-1902)
- Ihakara 'Ike' Robin (1886-1968)
- Bill Vella (1886-1971)
- George Stuart (1890-1953)
- Bill Higgins (1894-1939)
- Johnny Hape (1900-1969)
- Percy de Malmanche (1902-1968)
- Bill Richards (1907-1995)
- Claude Waite (1911-2000)
- Bill Meech (1914-1985)
- Ivan Bowen (1915-2007)
- Les Richards (1917-2000)
- Godfrey Bowen (1922-1994)
- Bing Macdonald (1928-2004)
- Makaore Potae (1934-2001)
- Ken Pike (1938-2025)
- Barbara Marsh (1943-2014)
- Mavis Mullins (1956 -****)
- Keith Wilson (1957-****)
- Michelle Anderson/Harrex (1963-****)
- Darin Forde (1965-****)
- Joanne Kumeroa (1969-2015)

Objective category: World individual or teams shearing championship winner supported by at least three major New Zealand titles:

- Roger Cox 1977; Golden Shears 1977-78, 1980; Southern Shears 1974-79 incl.
- Brian Quinn 1980; Golden Shears 1965, 1967-68, 1970, 1971, 1972; NZ Merino Shears 1968, 1970, 1978-79.
- Martin Ngataki 1980; Golden Shears 1979; National Lamb Shear (Raglan) 1977, 1978, 1979.
- Peter Casserly 1980; NZ Golden Blades 1975-76; Omarama Merino Shears 1995.
- Colin King 1984; Golden Shears 1982, 1987-88; National circuit six times.
- John Fagan 1984; Golden Shears 1984, National Lamb Shear (Raglan) 1981, 1984, 1985.
- David Fagan 1988, 1992, 1996, 1998, 2003; Golden Shears 16 times; NZ Open 16 times.
- Tony Dobbs 1988; Golden Blades 20 times.
- Paul Avery 2008; Golden Shears 2005, 2007; NZ Open 1995, 2000, 2007.
- Rowland Smith 2014; Golden Shears eight times; NZ Open eight times.
- John Kirkpatrick 2017; Golden Shears 2002, 2008, 2011-12; NZ Open 2008-09, 2012.
- Nathan Stratford 2017; New Zealand Merino Shears 2006, 2009, 2016, 2018, 2021.



This editor probably won't be around to do it, but would someone like to come back 20 years from now and see if any of these youngsters are making Golden Shears finals, or shaping as future Hall of Famers? The teddy bear shearers, Golden Shears 2026. George Graham and Alan Derryman (Golden Shears World Council) joined Dale Harris (Joint CEO Heiniger Australia/New Zealand) in honouring their efforts. (Golden Shears photo).

It's Geelong, Victoria in 2029

By Des Williams

Returning to Australia after his successful bid to host the 2029 world championships at Geelong, organising committee chairman Gary Leersen admitted to being "a bit dumbfounded" when hearing the decision.

One of three countries bidding for the championships at the Golden Shears World Council meeting in Masterton last month, Mr Leersen told his local newspaper the *Colac Herald* a lot of hard work had gone into the presentation. The "professionalism" of the bid got them home in a close contest with Wales, while Ireland had also lodged a bid.

Australia will be hosting the event for the third time after Perth WA in 1986 and Toowoomba, Qld in 2005. The Geelong world final will feature merino sheep. Wales has staged the world championships twice, in 1994 and 2010, and so too Ireland, in 1998 and 2014.

A shearing contractor based at Yeodene, Mr Leersen said the application had to convince World Council that Geelong Showgrounds had the correct infrastructure to stage the event, and to show why up to 30 other countries should make the trip half way across the globe to participate.

The championships are proposed as a five-day event for end October-early November 2029, leading into Melbourne Cup Week, and will provide a great opportunity to push the importance of Australian wool.

"We are going to have a heap of wool product stores and they'll run the national dog trials in conjunction with the



Above: Victorian shearing contractor Gary Leersen (right) watching Australian team manager Stuart Grigg receive the Host Nations Shield from Golden Shears president, Trish Stevens. Mr Leersen led the successful bid by Geelong (Victoria) to host the 2029 world championships.

shearing," Mr Leersen told the *Colac Herald*. "We could have a national woodchopping event there too. There is still plenty of planning ahead, with State shearing finals later this year at Geelong, as well as the national finals next year."

Geelong is a port city (pop.283,000) in Victoria, Australia, located at the eastern end of Corio Bay (the smaller western portion of Port Phillip Bay) and the left bank of Barwon River; about 75 km southwest of Melbourne. Geelong is the second-largest city in Victoria. 'Trip Advisor' lists the National Wool Museum among its ten most popular attractions (along with the Botanical Gardens, Geelong Gaol Museum and the Geelong Art Gallery.)



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**Media Release:
Shearing Sports New Zealand**

Shearing Sports New Zealand (SSNZ) apologises to its members for not adhering to its Constitution in 2024, which ultimately led to an ensuing dispute between SSNZ and Jills Angus Burney. The conflict was referred to mediation with the Sports Integrity Commission – Te Kahu Raunui. In seeking a way forward, both parties acknowledged responsibility for actions that occurred and have committed to improving their communication and processes. Resolutions were agreed by both parties and the matter is now resolved. The Sports Integrity Commission has now formally closed the case.

Regards

Warren Parker
SSNZ Chairman
10 March 2026.

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DON'T BLOW YOUR WRIST

Don't Blow Your Wrist

With main shear looming, now's the time to prepare the body for those big tallies. Blown wrists are really common among shearers who hit the board hard after a bit of a break. Just like the All Blacks wouldn't play a test without a pre-season or any warm-up, you need to make sure you're in good nick before you pick up the handpiece. You can learn simple warm-up routines that help prevent blown wrists at www.tahingatahi.co.nz.





NEW ZEALAND
RURAL SPORTS
awards

Media Release Saturday 14th March 2026

HALL OF FAME LAUNCHED, INAUGURAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARD PRESENTED, AND NEW ZEALAND'S ELITE CROWNED AT RURAL SPORTS AWARDS

The Ford New Zealand Rural Sports Awards made history last month, celebrating not only the nation's finest rural athletes but also the launch of the New Zealand Rural Sports Hall of Fame and the presentation of the inaugural Hydroflow Contribution to Rural Mental Health Award.

Held as the centrepiece of the Ford New Zealand Rural Sports Awards at Awapuni Racecourse, the evening honoured athletes whose 2025 campaigns conquered world stages – from the timber sports arenas of Milan to the treetops of Christchurch and the steeplechase tracks of Tokyo. Convenor of Judges Paul Allison MNZM described the evening as a watershed moment for rural sport.

“Tonight, we didn’t just award titles; we built a legacy. The calibre of achievement in this room was staggering, world champions, record-breakers, and pioneers who have not only dominated their disciplines but elevated them. To announce our first Hall of Fame inductee and our first Mental Health Award recipient alongside winners of such calibre is a profound privilege,” said Allison.

Matthew Slade, Marketing Managing of Ford New Zealand, reflected on the athletic excellence and momentum driving rural sport. “Tonight, we witnessed the incredible heart and soul of rural communities celebrated on one stage. For Ford, supporting these awards is about more than the world-class athleticism on display, though that is truly inspiring. It's

about honouring the grit, determination, and shared spirit that connects our brand to the people who power rural New Zealand. We are incredibly proud to stand with these athletes, their families, and the communities that shape them.”

John Fagan and Paul Harris

The Awards recognised two people with life-long ties to the New Zealand shearing industry. John Fagan became the inaugural inductee into the New Zealand Rural Sports Hall of Fame and a recipient of the Courtesy Ford Lifetime Legacy Award.

A four-time winner of the New Zealand Golden Pliers fencing title and Golden Shears champion in 1984, 91-time Open shearing winner, and former world record holder, Fagan’s competitive career is legendary. However, it is his work as an administrator and innovator that NZ Rural Sports Award officials suggest secures Fagan his place in history, “having co-founded the New Zealand Shearing Championships and the globally recognised “Running of the Sheep.” Honoured with an MBE, Fagan’s half-century of service has indelibly shaped New Zealand’s rural sporting identity.”

Paul Harris of Amberley was one of several people recognised for their outstanding contribution to New Zealand Rural Sports: “For over 50 years, Paul Harris has been a cornerstone of New Zealand shearing sports. In 2025, he chaired the critical Shearing Sports New Zealand constitutional review and received a King's Service Medal. He serves as Chair of the World Sheep Shearing Records Society, a role built on 17 years judging record attempts across three countries. Now 69, his focus remains on promoting young talent and serving the community, which has also benefited from his 50-year career in the fire service.

The Rural Sports recognition was the second such recent occasion for Paul Harris. In the 2026 New Year Royal Honours he was awarded the King’s Service Medal (KSM), for services to the fire services and the community.

He has served with the Waipara Volunteer Fire Brigade in North Canterbury since 1975, a full 50 years which has made him a relatively rare recipient of a Double Gold Star.

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The lens of Charly Harvey in Southern Sheds



The lens of Charly Harvey in Southern Sheds



Above: John Kirkpatrick and his son Daniel Kirkpatrick (37) at Golden Shears, Saturday night. Daniel made his mark as a rugby player (inside back), representing New Zealand at U19 and U20 level. He then played provincial rugby for Wellington, Hawke's Bay and Auckland before graduating to Super Rugby level with the Wellington-based Hurricanes (2009-2012) and the Auckland Blues (2010, 2018). Daniel also played several seasons of professional rugby in France. Since retiring from rugby some years ago Daniel has established business interests in gym ownership and is working toward supermarket ownership. Meantime it was a quiet night at Masterton for 'JK' as well, having missed both the National Circuit and Golden Shears open finals.

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Tribute: Noel Passau (1948-2026)

Adapted from Shearingworldwide Facebook

With great sadness, we acknowledge the passing of Noel Passau, a much-loved shearer, cowboy, craftsman, and friend to many across the shearing world. After a long illness, Noel passed away peacefully on 16 March 2026, surrounded by love. Our deepest and most heartfelt condolences go to the entire Passau whānau and to all who knew and cherished him.

Born in Taumarunui and raised on a farm in Matiere, Noel's love for farming and shearing began early and never left him. He followed the shearing world closely throughout his life, always keeping up with the latest news and especially enjoying checking in with the community here at *Shearingworldwide*.

As a teenager he became a shepherd, and it was there that his lifelong passion for being a cowboy truly took hold. Noel had a natural gift with horses – breaking them in, working with them, understanding them. His hands were always busy creating: Leatherwork such as saddles, belts, leather pouches for combs and cutters, each piece decorated with his western-style signature or art. If something needed fixing – electrical, plumbing, mechanical – Noel was the man who could put it right.

Because he understood the rhythm and needs of a woolshed so well, Noel went on to design and build woolsheds himself.

In the 1980s, he ran an Open run in Naike, West Waikato, employing one gang for nearly a decade. His favourite shearing mates were Bob Michie and Wally Nedham, friendships forged in hard work, laughter, and long days on the board.

Noel competed in shearing competitions throughout the 1970s and 80s, standing alongside some of the greats:

Barbara Marsh, two times Golden Shears women's shearing champion; Martin Ngataki, 1979 Golden Shears open champion; Ray Alabaster, nine times Golden Shears open finalist; Ivan Rosandich, 1981 Golden Shears open champion and eight times finalist; Eddie Reidy, 1973 Golden Shears open champion; John Fagan – 1984 Golden Shears open champion.

Later, Noel gave back to the sport by becoming a shearing judge, sharing his knowledge with fairness and pride.

Noel shored for Peter Lyon at Alexandra (1987–92) and became a trusted right-hand man, helping with gangs and keeping things running smoothly.

He also spent a year shearing in Australia, then returned home to work in bull farming for Frank Peacock, choosing to stay closer to his family.

He kept shearing part-time with Warren Parker, and before long he was taking Swiss shearers under his wing, helping them find their place in the New Zealand sheds. One of those young shearers was Martin Schindler, who this year stood on the world stage representing Switzerland at the 2026 Golden Shears world championships.

Noel's support extended beyond New Zealand; he spent a couple of seasons shearing in Switzerland, forging strong friendships and unforgettable memories along the way.

A true cowboy at heart, Noel fulfilled a lifelong dream by travelling to Canada to witness the Calgary Stampede — a treasured tick on his bucket list.

Noel built his own shearing trailer, taking on lifestyle blocks



Top and Above: Shearing notes the recent passing of Noel Passau (and pictured between fellow judges Harry Wells and Eddie Reidy Snr at the Red Fox Shears back in the 1990s)

and travelling the North Island to service the old drive-shaft shearing plants – the classic long-shaft systems with built-in down-tubes that powered every stand. His knowledge of these traditional setups was unmatched.

Noel later settled in Leamington, Cambridge, where he eased into a quieter pace of life. He shored at local primary schools, proudly teaching children about the shearing industry he loved so deeply. He adored the Waikato Fieldays, the shearing demonstrations at Mystery Creek, and especially the chance to perform for international visitors.

In retirement, Noel's heart remained with his animals. He adored his dogs, especially his beloved heading dog Vati. Right up until his final days, Noel would take his four-wheeler and Vati for a run, often visiting the nearby farm with his good friend Allan Brown, with whom he had shorn many years before.

Noel Passau lived a life of grit, generosity, craftsmanship, and heart. He loved the shearing world – and the shearing world loved him back.

His legacy lives on in every shed he worked in, every horse he trained, every young shearer he helped, and every life he touched along the way. *(Joanne Crawford)*

The World Championships

By Doug Laing (Shearing Sports NZ) and Des Williams

Friday's Teams Finals

After New Zealand's return from the 2023 world championships at Edinburgh with just minor placings – Tony Dobbs fourth in the blades final, Dobbs and Allan Oldfield second in the blades teams event and a sixth for Rowland Smith and Leon Samuels in the machines teams – hopes were high for some home town advantage at Masterton in 2026.

Those hopes of moving back into champion world shearing and woolhandling ranks soared on Thursday as home-country representatives topped the points in the opening rounds of both the blade shearing and woolhandling during the 64th Golden Shears in Masterton.

South Canterbury shearer Allan Oldfield headed a field of 32 as he started his bid to regain the blade shearing title he won in France in 2019, and rookie international Marika Braddick of Eketahuna and Motueka-based Joel Henare, from Gisborne, were one-and-two in a field of 36 chasing the woolhandling title he won in 2012 and 2017.

But it was different in the machine shearing, where Southern Hawke's Bay farmer and 2012 title-winning Scottish shearer Gavin Mutch led a pack of 51 hopefuls, by more than a point from surprise second-placing Adam Dickson, of Falkland Islands, Scotland teammate Hamish Mitchell, and New Zealanders Toa Henderson and Rowland Smith placed fourth and fifth respectively.

In the blade shearing, Allan Oldfield opened up a near five-points lead on South African Teboho Nyatsa, followed in order by New Zealand veteran Tony Dobbs, English shearer Tony Mudge, defending World blade shearing champion Bonile Rabela, from South Africa, and South Australian sheep studmaster Johnathon Dalla, in his first Golden Shears in Masterton despite being Australia's longest-serving blade shearing representative.

In the woolhandling, Braddick and Henare were followed in order by Racheal Hutchinson, of Australia, New Zealand-based Cook Islands representatives Keryn Herbert and Tina Elers, and 2014 World champion Hilary Bond-Harding, of England. In each event, points from two rounds decided the qualifiers for the teams final on Friday night, and the last stages of the individual championship on Saturday.

The machine shearers had two Perendales and three crossbred long wool sheep in the first round, and on Friday sheared five second-shear sheep each. The blade shearers shored three crossbred sheep in the first round on Thursday and then three Perendale ewes in the second round on Friday. The woolhandlers had two Perendale fleeces and two crossbred long wool fleeces in the first round, and four second-shear in the second.

The high hopes turned to history-making reality on the Friday night when New Zealand won all three teams titles, becoming the first nation to do so since 2000 at Bloemfontein, when teams blade shearing and woolhandling were introduced to the programme for the first time.

But none of the glory came easy, as was shown in the machine shearing win by Rowland Smith, of Maraekakaho, Hawke's Bay and Toa Henderson, of Kaiwaka (Northland). Their winning margin was just 0.277 points from the England team of Matt Smith (Rowland's older brother), a Cornwall farmer, and Nick Greaves, a Devon shearer who works each New Zealand summer for Napier contractor Brendan Mahony.

South Canterbury blade shearers Allan Oldfield and Tony Dobbs won shearing's version of an All Blacks-Springboks test match with victory by just 1.228 points from South African shearers Bonile Rabela (the reigning individual champion) and Teboho Nyatsa.

But in the woolhandling, the New Zealand team of Joel Henare, from Gisborne, and international rookie Marika Braddick, of Eketahuna, the margin was more decisive, with victory by more than 52 points over the New Zealand-based Cook Islands team of Keryn Herbert, of Te Kuiti, and Tina Elers, of Matura. (Further success for the Cook Islands came when machine shearers Noel Gardiner, of Whanganui, and Max Winders, of Invercargill, won the championship's first-ever 'B final'.)

The blades final had the near-capacity crowd in Masterton's War Memorial Stadium enthralled. With the black singlet in front from the start in the six-team contest of six sheep per team, Oldfield mastered the three perendales, while Nyatsa faced some struggles with one of his sheep.

Dobbs continued the job after the changeover to the three long wool crossbred sheep, and went in for the last about half-a-minute up, but then Rabela captivated the crowd as he hit the smooth track down the last side, sometimes as clean as if it was a machine handpiece, and there was under five seconds in it at the end.



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Above sequence: Rowland Smith demonstrating his breath-taking skill and speed in the world shearing final.

Above: An emotional Rowland Smith holds aloft the coveted World Shearing Championship silver salver. Photo credits: Pete Nikolaison.

The woolhandling was run as a two-heat final, with New Zealand in the first heat facing the England pair of Jess Parkhouse and 2014 individual champion Hilary Bond-Harding, and the Alexandra mother-and-daughter Gabriela Schmidt-Morrell and Charis Morrell, representing Schmidt-Morrell's native Switzerland.

In the second heat, Cook Islands faced challenges from the strong Australian pairing of Racheal Hutchinson and Alexander Schoff, and the Falkland Islands pair Pilar Castro and Talia Jones. Keryn Herbert and Tina Elers emerged from there to claim second place overall.

Matt Smith set a cracking pace against his brother in the first half of the machine shearing final of 16 sheep per team, and while Henderson worked hard to close the gap in the latter stages there was still about 44 seconds in it at the end as England clocked a time of 15min 28.93sec. But the Kiwis had the better quality and regained a title New Zealand last won at Invercargill in 2017.

Teams final Machine Shearing

'A' final (16 sheep – 8 crossbred long wool, 8 second-shear): New Zealand (Rowland Smith, Toa Henderson) 16m 12.451s, 57.74pts, 1; England (Matt Smith, Nicholas Greaves) 15m 28.93s, 58.017pts, 2; Scotland (Hamish Mitchell, Gavin Mutch) 15m 59.36s, 58.538pts, 3; Wales (Gwion Lloyd Evans, Llyr Jones) 16m 17.414s, 59.121pts, 4; Australia (Daniel McIntyre, Sam Bacon) 17m 51.644s, 63.582pts, 5; Falkland Islands (Adam Dickson, Evan Jones) 18m 23.192s, 66.28pts, 6.

'B final' (10 sheep – 5 crossbred long wool, 5 second-shear): Cook Islands (Noel Gardiner, Max Winders) 12m 24.859s, 48.743pts, 1; France (Jeremy Leygonie, Felix Cesbron) 13m 29.991s, 49.6pts, 2; Republic Of Ireland (Denis O'Sullivan, Patrick Corrigan) 13m 33.006s, 52.45pts, 3; USA (Paul Astin, Alex Moser) 12m 26.845s, 53.242pts, 4; Mongolia (Bassandorj Erdenetogt, Serbuddee Lkhgvasturen) 14m

45.352pts, 54.268pts, 5; Northern Ireland (Graeme Davidson, Alex Butler) 13m 48.271pts, 54.714pts, 6.

Teams final Blade shearing:

(Six sheep – 3 Perendale ewes, 3 crossbred long wool): New Zealand (Allan Oldfield, Tony Dobbs) 16m 46.515s, 63.496pts, 1; South Africa (Bonile Rabela, Teboho Nyatsa) 16m 51.275s, 64.724pts, 2; Australia (Johnathon Dalla, Daniel Rogers) 19m 40.136s, 76.177pts, 3; England (Andrew Mudge, George Mudge) 22m 15.006s, 83.75pts, 4; Wales (Elfed Wyn Jackson, Rhydian Evans) 20m 20.777s, 84.039pts, 5; Republic Of Ireland (James Hopkins, Martin Hopkins) 24m 2.857s, 89.973pts, 6.



Above: "Send them victorious, happy and glorious ..." The New Zealand teams: Toa Henderson and Rowland Smith with manager Bart Hadfield; Tony Dobbs and Allan Oldfield with Bart; Marika Braddick and Joel Henare with the history-making manager.

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Teams final Woolhandling

(Ten fleeces – 6 crossbred long wool, 4 second-shear): New Zealand (Joel Henare, Marika Braddick) 110.965pts, 1; Cook Islands (Keryn Herbert, Tina Elers) 163.022pts, 2; Australia (Racheal Hutchinson, Alexander Schoff) 171.858pts, 3; Switzerland (Gabriela Schmidt-Morrell, Charis Morrell) 173.664pts, 4; Falkland Islands (Talia Jones, Pilar Castro) 175.1pts, 5; England (Hilary Bond-Harding, Jess Parkhouse) 223.723pts, 6.

Saturday's Individual finals

New Zealand's hopes of moving back into individual world champion shearing and woolhandling ranks began with South Canterbury shearer Allan Oldfield heading a field of 32 as he started his bid to regain the blade shearing title he won in France in 2019. Rookie international woolhandler Marika Braddick, of Eketahuna and Motueka-based Joel Henare, from Gisborne, were one-and-two in a field of 36 chasing the woolhandling title Henare won in 2012 and 2017.

But it was different in the machine shearing, where Southern Hawke's Bay farmer and 2012 title-winning Scottish shearer Gavin Mutch led a pack of 51 other hopefuls, by more than a point from surprise second-placing Adam Dickson, of Falkland Islands, Scotland teammate Hamish Mitchell, and New Zealanders Toa Henderson and Rowland placed fourth and fifth respectively.

At the completion of both rounds, New Zealand had all its players safely into the semifinals. Gavin Mutch sat atop the 12 machine shearers by more than 1.5 points from Toa Henderson, with Smith third and the following: Llyr Jones, Adam Dickson, Hamish Mitchell, Matt Smith, Gwion Lloyd Evans (defending champion), Denis O'Sullivan, Daniel McIntyre, Jeremy Leygonie and Noel Gardiner.

The 12 woolhandlers looking for top six placings (for a two-heat final) were, in order, Joel Henare, Keryn Herbert, Racheal Hutchinson, Marika Braddick, Charis Morrell,

Johnathan Haakull, Tina Elers, Hilary Bond-Harding (2014 champion), Pilar Castro, Lucie Grancher, Jess Parkhouse and Rosie Keenan (defending champion).

Two South Africans, two New Zealanders, two Australians, two Englishmen, two from Wales and two from Ireland made up the blades top 12, with Elfed Wyn Jackson last in, bidding for a fourth final since 1998. Unfortunately, the likeable Welshman could not make the finals lineup.

Then it was up-town Saturday night at Masterton, with perhaps 1300 packed into the War Memorial Stadium and probably just as many outside in the 'Fan Zone' watching the activity on a giant screen. Black singlets, black T-shirts and red ribbons mixed like streamers on election night as New



Above: The individual champions – Rowland Smith, Bonile Rabela and Joel Henare.

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Zealand claimed an additional two titles to go with the three from Friday. This was an unprecedented five wins from six events at the Golden Shears world shearing and woolhandling championships.

Joel Henare, from Gisborne, completed a third teams and individual titles double, and Rowland Smith, of Maraekakaho, claimed a second individual machine shearing title. The only event not won by the Kiwis, recoiling from that failure to win any of the events in Scotland three years ago, was the individual blades title, with South African Bonile Rabela repeating his success from Scotland.

Machine Shearing Individual final (20 sheep – 4 Perendale, 6 crossbred long wool, 10 second-shear): Rowland Smith (New Zealand) 17m 15.670s, 60.784pts, 1; Toa Henderson (New Zealand) 16m 40.349s, 63.467pts, 2; Gavin Mutch (Scotland) 17m 23.219s, 64.011pts, 3; Llyr Jones (Wales) 17m 53.349s, 69.017pts, 4; Gwion Lloyd Evans (Wales) 18m 30.268s, 69.313pts, 5; Denis O’Sullivan (Ireland) 18m 54.244s, 71.662pts, 6.

Blade shearing Individual final (6 sheep – 3 Perendale, 3 crossbred long wool): Bonile Rabela (South Africa) 14m 26.441s, 56.322pts, 1; Teboho Nyatsa (South Africa) 15m 45.612s, 56.781pts, 2; Allan Oldfield (New Zealand) 14m 39.239s, 61.462pts, 3; Tony Dobbs (New Zealand) 17m 20.313s, 65.016pts, 4; Johnathon Dalla (Australia) 16m 56.497s, 68.995pts, 5; Andrew Mudge (England) 19m 06.945s, 77.517pts, 6.

Woolhandling Individual final (8 fleeces - 2 Perendale, 2 crossbred long wool, 4 second-shear): Joel Henare (New Zealand) 105.780pts, 1; Keryn Herbert (Cook Islands) 122.680pts, 2; Charis Morrell (Switzerland) 138.362pts, 3; Racheal Hutchinson (Australia) 151.161pts, 4; Marika Braddick (New Zealand) 177.484pts, 5; Rosie Keenan (Scotland) 226.665pts, 6.



Top: Eileen Evans in the open woolhandling heats. **Above:** No world title at stake here but we like what they are doing with the fabulous fibre. (*Shearing magazine*)



Above: When two hands and nine baskets aren't enough, you might have to bite the bullet. Or be like Rosie Keenan and bite the woollet. (*Pete Nikolaison photo.*)



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**Special Edition: The 20th World Championships
Masterton, New Zealand, 4-7 March 2026**



Rowland Smith (New Zealand): World shearing champion 2014, 2026. (Pete Nikolaisen photo.)



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CORRECTIONS

World Championships Special Edition *Shearing Magazine*

The Special Edition *Shearing* magazine released on 18 March 2026 had a number of errors which readers might wish to note. These have been corrected and a revised copy is available on request. Email shearingmag@xtra.co.nz for copy. The errors were:

Page 4: “A further twelve countries have since been granted World Council membership ...” should read a further thirteen countries – Falkland Islands and Basque Country were added at the 2026 meeting. Spain, meanwhile, having attended ten world championships since 1992 including Scotland in 2023, has now withdrawn its membership. Also, Bryan Williams (not Brian).

Page 7: Team members from ‘Basque’ should be from Basque Country. Australian woolhandler Racheal Hutchison should be Hutchinson.

Page 18: Spelling errors in the photo caption – ‘acquaintence’ should be acquaintance. ‘aointed’ should be appointed.

Page 21: Dave Craven is from USA, not South Africa.

Page 28: Blade Shearing teams Honours Board – 2026 should read New Zealand (Tony Dobbs and Allan Oldfield). Not South Africa.

Page 44: Three references to Dennis O’Sullivan should be Denis O’Sullivan.

Page 58: Bronwyn Tango should be Bronwen.

Page 76: Australia 2019 team member should be Racheal Hutchinson. 2010 team member Bill Hutchinson.

Page 84: Basque should be Basque Country (not formerly Spain).

Looking back – let's not blame Rudds ...!

By Des Williams

We've noted elsewhere in these pages how the blade shearers from South Africa and Lesotho have dominated world championship events since 1996, with only Allan Oldfield's "incursion" at Le Dorat in 2019 breaking an otherwise perfect record. The last thing we want to do here is go looking for excuses as to why New Zealand hasn't featured just a little bit more often than that, but we just may have a New Zealander to blame! We turn back the pages of history to November 1995, when this writer contributed a story for the **Wool Report** publication, and now draw heavily on that story to fill in some background and the shearer training role played in South Africa by **Ian Rutherford** who, that year, was "Back home with top shearers from South Africa."

New Zealand is the best place in the world for training South African shearers to international standard, says three-times national fine wool champion of the 1960s and former New Zealand Wool Board shearing instructor, Ian Rutherford.

A South African Wool Board shearing director since 1981, Rutherford returned home recently with a four-man team which is building up to the world championships at Masterton next March [1996]. The four South Africans – blade shearers Oneboy Naunau and Eliot Ntsombo, and machine shearers Piet Tenteng and Charles August, will be working for Peter Lyon in Alexandra and Kerry Nolan in Christchurch until the championships.



Above: Ian Rutherford (right) with the first African team he took to the world championships, at Royal Bath & West in 1992. From left: Elliot Ntsombo, Elliot Nyatsa, Sam Phendo and Johannes Fekisi.

"They'll learn a great deal in seven months and the long stay will have even greater value when they return home," Rutherford says.

"I want the shearers to improve their productivity and skills and to discover the importance of working to shifts, rather than the ad hoc way of South Africa. There they shear small mobs, the slowest shearer gets the worst sheep and the others all stand around waiting for the next mob.

"I want these guys to learn they can shear a good tally in eight hours, if they apply themselves, and to take that message and discipline back to the shearers at home."

Rutherford says the New Zealand working environment will show the South Africans they can shear 200 sheep a day and make good money, just by having good organisation and facilities.

"Then they'll go home wanting better conditions for themselves and other shearers back in South Africa."

Getting the South Africans here was a huge challenge, Rutherford says. The contractor for whom all four worked didn't relish them being away so long. "He was prepared to release the machine shearers for three weeks before the championships, and he wouldn't release the hand shearers at all. He said if I didn't accept that offer it would be withdrawn entirely. When the shearers learned of his attitude, they all resigned from their jobs to come here."

Communicating with shearers was Rutherford's biggest challenge when he took up the job 14 years ago (c1981). He saw little point learning Afrikaans, because few black people spoke it.

"I had to communicate through my shearing skills, though I learned a few polite greetings. My mind was so full of solving problems, like the equipment, the type of sheep – those problems were enormous. Selecting three instructors to help became next priority. Candidates had to be leaders of their own people, respected by the farmers AND good shearers.

"After two years I rated my first instructor, Eliot Nyatsa, among the best shearers I'd seen anywhere. He was an absolute artist at both hand and machine shearing."



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Helping change attitudes among South African farmers during apartheid was also satisfying, Rutherford said. "When Eliot was first appointed, an industry leader told him to sit in the back of the bakkie (utility vehicle). I said, 'Well, if that happens, I pack it up and go home.'

"We'd arrive at a farmer's gate and he'd see this black man beside me in the front. When it came time to leave, we'd shake all the trainers by the hand, Eliot would jump in the front seat and off we'd go. Next year we'd see that farmer with his 'head boy' in the front of the bakkie.

"Many farmers would say, 'Shear a thousand sheep and we'll give you some mutton.' Some teams would wait three or four days for their first feed of meat. I'd say to the farmer, 'they are going to shear the thousand, why don't you give them the mutton first?'

"Slowly those little things started to count, and that was nice – having some influence in changing the attitudes and uplifting the shearers during those years of apartheid."

* * * * *

Ian Rutherford won the New Zealand Merino Shears (fine wool championships) three times, in 1965, 1967 and 1969 and was runner-up to Brian Quinn in 1968. He spent his early years around Blenheim before moving to Alexandra where he became an integral part of Murray McSkimming's gangs. He left Central Otago in 1972 and moved to Christchurch and a position with the New Zealand Wool Board in charge of shearer training in the South Island. Ian replaced Robin Kidd, who in turn had moved to Wellington as Godfrey Bowen's understudy. In 1980 Ian took up a three month "instructional



Above: South African blade shearers in New Zealand 1993 for a test series against New Zealand. Pictured here at Christchurch are Tony Dobbs, Peter Race, Myaluzeli Klass and Elias Hans.

tour" in South Africa, which then led to the role discussed above in 1981. He was manager of South African teams at the world championships in 1992 (Royal Bath & West) where the blade shearers shore demonstrations; 1994 (Builth Wells), 1996 (Masterton) and 1998 (Gorey, Ireland).

Ian and his family returned to New Zealand in 2002. They lived for several years at Waiau before retiring to Christchurch.

And Ian's victory at Alexandra in 1969 was "immortalised" in verse by our favourite poet, the late 'Blue Jeans' Ross McMillan from Naseby:

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The combs were filled, the white wool spilled,
The judges scanned and scored,
With every one a shearing "gun"
Upon the shearing board.
Now Mac* could last and Quinn was fast,
But reigning like a lord,
The man to take the "ringer's" stake
Was slim Ian Rutherford.

With thought and care he ground his gear,
Each cutter was a sword.
He checked each sheep, each comb's wide sweep
No flaw could he afford.
You should have seen each blow so clean
That claimed their just reward,
No man could "gun" a shearing run
Like slim Ian Rutherford.

Eric Maskill, cunning rascal,
With chunky shoulders broad,
He made them race and set the pace
And led the fine wool horde.
But no-one "gunned" with craft that stunned,
Nor pulled a starting cord,
To claim and lease the Golden Fleece
Like slim Ian Rutherford.

(*Mac – Murray McSkimming)

Looking back – Forde and Ingram 1996

(By Des Williams)

It's a toss up who is the most important person involved with a world shearing record attempt – the shearer/s who gets up on the day (after months of intense training) and shears the sheep, or the person who masterminds or choreographs the whole show. Such is the thoroughness of his own preparation, organiser Peter Black is later able to report only two minor hiccups during the world two-stand shearing record at Wairaki Station on 1 February 1996.

In recent seasons, Black played what

he calls minor roles in the Edsel Forde and Dion Morrell solo rides. This time, the West Australian-based Kiwi shearing consultant played a leading hand, spending six weeks in Southland prior to the big day. That "big day" saw Darin Forde and Wayne Ingram, two Southlanders, shear 1335 Romney ewes at Horace Miller's woolshed (scene of Morrell's 716 a year earlier), adding 141 to the standing record established by Stephen Dodds and Mark Spain at Etalvale in 1989.

"We had closed circuit television on

both shearers, with 25-inch screens outside so the people who couldn't fit into the shed could see what was going on. That worked well until the last run, when I think the crowd must have accidentally pulled the cable. Then, about 4.30pm the P/A system wouldn't work and we couldn't keep the crowd up to date with the count. But they were the only things that let us down all day."

Twenty-four hours after the event, life returns to normal, Peter says. It takes months of planning and a month to actually set everything up properly, including modifications to the shed, and making sure the machines are in tip-top order. "Then you pull it all down again the day after it's all over."

A week before the event, the Wairaki shed was being prepared, receiving new boards, two new catching pens, and big fans to suck the hot air out of where the sheep would be sweated up, and from where the people would be crowding in.

"But we still had to take three sheets of iron off both sides of the shed on the day, to make sure the shearers (on opposite sides of the board) had identical conditions. Then, the 2000 sheep in the record mob were brought in four days out from the record, body-weighted and a final 1500 selected for the day."

The actual plant was also modified – heavier pull cords, reshaped cams, motors remounted so the whole drive wheel went on the cone, and plant adjusted to run at 3550 revs. "We also used pin drives in the machines. If a worm drive hits an ear tag the machine jumps out of gear, but with a pin drive the handpiece cuts though a plastic tag – these sheep all had plastic tags in the last side ear so there was always a risk of hitting them, but the shearers wouldn't have to stop when it did happen."

Three days before the event, Peter Black found himself building a new handpiece – using hand-picked spare parts – for Darin Forde, who wasn't 100% happy with his second-stringer.

"We actually pulled all the handpieces apart beforehand and greased the centre posts instead of oiling them, to keep them cleaner, and that was repeated at the end of each run. John Ingram [Wayne's father, former Southland champion] helped with that vital task." (To page 59)



Looking back: Horrie Miller (manager Wairaki Station), Wayne Ingram, Peter Black and Darin Forde photographed the day after their two stand nine-hour ewe shearing record at Wairaki on 1 February 1996.

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The 'dog-leg' catching pens were also built to Peter Black designs – designed on computer in Western Australia last year and first used by Dion Morrell doing his 716. "The design allows the shearer to catch every sheep from one step into the pen. The pen holds 10 and can be filled when eight have been taken out. The other two stay up in the small race 'dog-leg' section, but of course they don't have to take those.

"The stands being used were each one in from the wall, so both shearers got the same amount of air; both catching pens were the same size; the machines were running the same speed; the sweating up pens were the same size, so both shearers had exactly the same conditions. I set the motors back a little bit differently because Wayne's shearing position is different to Darin's, but that's about it, as far as difference in set up goes. We also greased and oiled the chutes so the sheep would go down easily."

Peter says both shearers started their day with 50-second splits, which would give them 648 – or 650 with a couple of "catches" (sheep caught within seconds of the bell and legitimately shorn after time). "Because it was the first time either shearer had gone for a record, we decided on those tallies, but Edsel was calling "48s" for Darin long before the finish because he was obviously going at that pace.

"Wayne stayed on 50s all the way and though they both tired in the last run, the crowd really revved up and carried them through to the end. It was



just great at the finish to see Darin go down and congratulate Wayne because all the way through it had been a joint effort, a two-stand team because the pair have been good mates for so long. There was no question of one doing more than the other and that becoming an issue – they did their 1335 sheep together, for each other.

"They are pretty much unsung heroes, these two fellas because they shear a helluva lot of sheep each day in the sheds and they would do as many over the year as any other shearer in New Zealand.

"The other huge thing about doing records here in Southland is the amount of local support. In the end the glory goes to the people doing the record, but there's a huge team of people and supporters involved really, and they all

have to believe in what the shearers are trying to achieve.

"The local sawmill donated a heap of timber to put new flooring in the shed. David McNay's support from the Waiiau Hotel was fantastic. Edsel Forde and Dion Morrell acted as seconds; Wayne had Snow Quinn as his pen man and Darin had Martin Forde in his pen; Mark Hough and Mana Te Whata were sweating up the sheep, while Raelene Howes and Huia Clarke did great jobs with the woolhandling. The list just goes on and on."

Darin Forde's 688 (155, 135, 132, 135, 131) is the third highest tally in history behind Morrell and [David] Fagan, and at his first attempt. Wayne's 647 (151, 124, 126, 125, 121) puts him seventh on the list (or ninth, counting Alan Donaldson's 659 and Stephen Dodds's 654 under pre-1983 rules).

"This was a bloody emotional afternoon when it was all over," Peter Black says. "I could see grown men with tears in their eyes, and people going away with great lumps in their throats. I had to go away and pull some nails out of a wall, or I'd have been a bit of a wuss myself!"

And the shearers? They looked as good the day after as they had the day before, and even helped dismantle the special features put up in the shed.

But then, we've come to expect that from world class, world record-setting shearing triathletes.

Adapted from Top Class Wool Cutters by Des Williams, 1996.

Note: Stacey Te Huia and Sam Welch exceeded the Forde/Ingram tally on 18 January 2012, shearing 1341 sheep at Te Hape Station, near Benneydale.

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Lawrence Tyree's gift for lifting others

By Joanne Crawford

Every now and then, our shearing world is shaped by someone whose impact reaches far beyond the board. For many young shearers across South Canterbury, New Zealand, and even across the world, that person was Lawrence Tyree.

Born in 1937, Lawrence learned to shear in Australia before returning home to New Zealand, where he built a life dedicated to hard work, fairness, and helping the next generation find their feet. He never bragged about his own achievements – instead, he poured his energy into lifting others.

Over the decades, Lawrence became known for taking van-loads of young shearers to the Golden Shears, giving them opportunities they might never have had otherwise. He taught them clean shearing, discipline, and the little tricks that only a lifetime in the sheds can teach – like “don’t wear new shearing pants on stage” and “put your last blow near the porthole.”

He didn’t drink, didn’t touch drugs, and expected the same commitment from the boys he trained. But behind that discipline was a man who cared deeply. He believed in giving young people a fair chance – sometimes before they even believed in themselves.

His influence stretched far beyond New Zealand. When a young Japanese shearer, Shun Oishi, struggled to find guidance, it was Lawrence who stepped in. He coached him, fed him (with the famously unforgettable Lawrence breakfast), trained him alongside champions, and even walked into a courtroom to help him stay in New Zealand. Without Lawrence, the Japan Shearing Team might never have existed.

Lawrence’s life wasn’t without heartbreak, and he carried deep losses quietly. But even after the hardest chapters, he found ways to stand back up, keep teaching, keep inventing, and keep contributing. His passion for shearing gear led to the creation of Bei Yuan, now one of the biggest shearing gear producers in the world – and his name, Tyree, still sits proudly on every box.

He coached champions, encouraged underdogs, and opened doors for countless young people who simply needed someone to believe in them. Some loved him, some argued with him, but nobody ever forgot him – because he was one of a kind.



Above: A typical scene – Lawrence Tyree (almost obscured) holding court and imparting the universal knowledge of shearing with the African shearers at Rakaia in the mid-1990s. **Below left:** Lawrence (supporter and sponsor) with Rei Rangiawha during one of Rei's world record attempts. Records judge Stewart Weir in the background.

Today, we celebrate the man who gave so much of himself to others. A man who shaped careers, changed lives, and left a legacy that stretches from Timaru to the world stage.

Lawrence is now residing at Margaret Wilson Home, 27 Seddon Street, Highfield, Timaru, South Island, New Zealand. He is surrounded by care, comfort, and familiar faces – but nothing means more to him than knowing he is remembered with kindness. If Lawrence has touched your life – whether through shearing, coaching, a shared laugh, a lesson learned, or simply a moment you’ve never forgotten – he would truly treasure hearing from you.

Here’s to Lawrence Tyree – a mentor, a character, a pioneer, and a quiet hero of our shearing community.



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Dare to dream – Womens' four-stand

By Barbara Newton

On a cool Tuesday morning on the 20th January this year “Melrose Station”, South Otago, played host to a successful record shearing attempt where four remarkable Māori wāhine; Rose Lewis, Pagan Rimene, Te Atakura ('Tuts') Crawford, and Ariana Te Whata stepped up to establish a benchmark in the first ever multi-stand, women’s eight-hour strong woolled lamb record category, shearing a tally of 1938 lambs. This was on the back of a flurry of woman’s participation in the shearing record category over the past six years.

How did it come about. Motivation. Background.

The idea to do a record was sparked numerous years ago by Rose (pictured opposite), who had her eye on a world record ever since she had picked up shearing at age 35.

Drawn to records – the challenge, discipline and what they represent, she knew it was something she wanted to be part of one day. Her father Victor (Toa) was a record holder and as a fifth-generation shearer she wanted to follow in his footsteps, become part of the family legacy and to become the first female family member to be in the history books.

She talked about the possibility over the years with several different shearers and eventually approached Pagan about doing one together, bugging her relentlessly in the previous year. Originally, they were looking to do a two-stand, any breed, anywhere.

For most contemplating attempting a world record is not what you would be thinking when recovering from surgery required to remove from your body a substantial amount of stainless steel (rods and screws) as a result of a serious accident in 2008.



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But Pagan Rimene (pictured above) did just that with the thought that, “waiting for the perfect timing for my body” was not an option, spurring her into planning action. What better way “for a fast, positive recovery”.

Within weeks the wheels were turning, fast. Jared Manihera had found some sheep, and the farmer was on board. The multi-stand became a better option for the first attempt and Te Atakura Crawford and eventually Ariana Te Whata accepted the invitation and challenge. All had a common dream, genuine desire for success and interest in putting a record in the books.

Each was from respected wool harvesting whānau, so motivation was not an issue, and wanting to do their families proud.



The Process

Attempting a record is a lot more than just rocking up to the shed on the day like a normal workday. There are rules to follow, and much planning is required before they actually step out on to the board with the first sheep. On this occasion there was no pressure to reach a target tally, just to make a line in the sand, and to set personal goals.

There are a lot of people engaged in the process, a team must be built. It also doesn't come without costs. Sheep and, substantial industry backing and sponsorship are required also. For all the crucial support and belief of those who came on board the team is extremely grateful.

This is where experienced campaigners and organisers Brendon Potae and Dion Morrell came into play, stepping up to the event management roles and dealing with its many issues. Huge kudos goes to them for bringing the record to life and ensuring the smooth running leading up to the and including on the day.

Central to the event was the support from the enthusiastic Wilson family, namely Peter & Joy, John & Emily of Melrose Station, for the use of their Romney lambs and shed for the event on the Cone Block, set in the heart of the rolling country of South Otago.

The property opposite is planted in the dreaded conifers, but the generational Wilson family, are "still farming producing plenty of meat and wool ... with 'a few sheep in a couple of paddocks ... just like the original settlers,'" said Peter.

They have always been very supportive of the wool harvesting industry, Peter himself having shorn 500 lambs back in the day, so was very appreciative of the efforts and skills required for this event.

Above left: Te Atakura Crawford. Above right: Ariana Te Whata shearing number 500, with Peter Harvey, Gage Haora and Hararei Te Whata expressing their joy.

In the past Melrose Station have been great supporters of the Junior woolhandling event at the Otago Shears.

The road to achieving a goal doesn't come easily, and preparation for the team wasn't all plain sailing with many physical and mental challenges to overcome.

Mentally each had thoughts of not wanting to let down the team, self-doubt, uncertainty, emotions came and went.

Not an easy task but when the going gets tough the tough get going. Physically, both Pagan and Rose had some health issues to contend with that hampered their preparation, but no way were they going to let them get in the way of the opportunity.

For Pagan, her biggest challenge was that following surgery she had lost all of her strength and muscle tone, couldn't even pick up a block of butter or two litres of milk, had to wait three months before going to the gym, and it was six months before she even attempted to get some shearing under her belt.

From being spoon feed to having someone tie shoelaces, putting on suspenders, doing her hair, Pagan was literally carried over the finish line by her team.

Support crews.

It was imperative therefore that support persons and pen crews were carefully selected in the numerous roles. None more so than the experienced wool handlers: Candy Hiri, Ngapine Penaha, Tut's partner Leah Brensell, and Anne-Maree Kahukura, who worked tirelessly keeping the wool moving, board clear, ensuring there was nothing to distract or impede the shearers from doing their job, and helping to keep their respective shearer on track.



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Behind the scenes

There was no shortage of experience and a wealth of shearing knowledge among the pens with whanau, current and past record holders, and shearing legends that included (but not limited to) Harvey Pairama, Sasha Bond, Megan Whitehead, Peter Harvey, Mana Te Whata, Darin Forde, Leon Samuels, Eru Weeds and Jared Manihera, Nathan Stratford and Ringakaha Paewai. Also on board was Wayne Perkins, with the live tally and streaming, complete with first time commentary initiative, who brought the attempt to a wide enthusiastic international audience. Not forgetting those behind the scenes, such as the Potae catering team and food gatherers, who kept the crews fuelled for the duration with a feast worthy for champions, the shepherds who kept the sheep up, wool movers and pressers.

Tallies

Conditions leading up to the of the attempt were far from ideal with the fickle wet, windy, cold weather experienced in the region over recent months. On the day the temperature, at just 10 degrees, was more akin to that of a morning at pre-lamb.

Shearer	Ist run	2nd run	3rd run	4th run	Total
Te Atakura	129	133	133	135	530
Ariana	124	124	127	129	504
Pagan	119	118	126	118	481
Rose	103	104	106	110	423
Team totals	475	479	492	492	1938

Except for Rose, all attained a personal best lamb tally on the day. She had previously shorn a best strong wool lamb tally of 513 at Raglan in 2024. It was a tough day at the office for her due to several issues; pressure from a tough start, her gear not running properly, numbers dropped, and she found it difficult to reset and stay focused. Despite feeling that she didn't want to continue she showed strength and resilience to get through the day without giving in. It was a relief to finish!

Pagan also showed true grit and determination throughout the day. To further add to her physical challenges, she had contracted the dreaded COVID just days prior to the record, which made breathing difficult and no doubt contributed to her not being able to maintain her effort in the last run.

She admitted that it was "the hardest most rewarding of challenges so far," and that letting go of the last sheep was the most satisfying personal moment.

Te Atakura finished with the top tally of the day. Better known for her merino shearing exploits in Australia and New Zealand Merino Shears senior champion 2013, she had only achieved her first 500 just weeks previously when she was home for a visit to Gisborne.

With her shy, quiet demeanour, emotion rarely showing, motivated by her faith in God, "trusting that he had my back she remained totally focused, cool, calm and collected throughout the day. The photo on her stand of the late Joanne Kumeroa was a nod to a very special friend who had taken Tuts under her wing in Hamilton, Australia.

Jo "was like a mother to me, staunch in showing me all the affections a mother does and just ..wanted the best for me.. we did talk about doing a record together but sadly she got sick and shattered me...took a while to accept and heal, in my frame of mind [I]was never gonna do a record with anyone else but glad I did with three amazing shearers at that".

A late replacement shearer with a previous best tally of around 380, prioritising clean over numbers, the youngster of the gang Ariana (Missy), realised her first 400, and then 500! A phenomenal feat for the youngster. Last year she was selected as a cadet in the New Zealand Merino Cadetship run in conjunction with ELITE Wool Industry Training (EWIT) during which her shearing went ahead in leaps and bounds.

She displayed the traits of determination and quality from her parents Mana and Vanessa, and was literally skipping into the pen all day, especially in the last run when the 500 became a probability. With her characteristic smile and upbeat grin Ariana showed a real joy at the completion of her triple feats, "all I ever wanted to do was shear in front of my family."

You don't go through all the above without learning something, gaining experience and with many positives to go forward with for future attempts. Specifically, these included for Rose learning to trust her own judgement and back herself, especially under pressure. Learning to deal with overwhelming emotion was a big takeaway from this journey for Ariana. They now help to fuel her confidence rather than hinder it.

Gaining knowledge around how important bodywork (Laura Hancock was amazing), nutrition, hydration and preparation was the takeaway for Pagan.

The end of the day realized a dream come true, "We're in the books!" exclaimed Rose.

These woman, and those before them, have earned so much respect for their achievements and are paving the way to challenge and inspire future female shearers to have a go. So watch out, woman's shearing is on a roll!

The gravity of gravity

By Roger Leslie

As a younger man, I never gave much thought to gravity. Mostly what went up, came back down (excepting the price of oysters and fuel) and as long as I wasn't standing directly under it, that was fine with me.

I remember as a teenager, fresh out of school, working for a fencer. One day, after spending considerable time and effort driving an anchor into a creek bed to tie a fence down, the boss and I tied each individual wire down to the anchor by me swinging on it with a claw hammer while he tied it. Just as we got to the last one, the whole shebang twanged skyward as the anchor tore itself out of where we had so laboriously driven it.

There we were, standing knee deep in the bog looking at each other and the tiedown dangling mockingly above our heads. While he was giving vent to his feelings, using some observations unfamiliar to my conservative upbringing, an alarm bell was ringing somewhere in the deep recesses of my mind. I was young, so I ignored it.

But then I noticed in my hands the rubber grip of the hammer, but no hammer. I looked up and there it was



descending out of the clear blue sky, straight toward our unprotected heads. He later recalled to his wife that I had saved his life by pushing him out of the way. Really, I was just getting away myself and he was the only point of purchase at hand, but he's entitled to his opinion.

As a Kiwi shearer, I never gave much thought to hanging up shearing machines as almost all I used had been put up by someone else. I only gave it consideration when it was too far (or not far enough) above the board. Some farmers even had posted the New Zealand Wool Board recommendations they had clearly ignored, right beside the offending machine. One thing they had in common was serious bolts and attachments holding them up. These I took for granted.

In the Europe of the mid-eighties, you brought your own machine and hung it up yourself. It was a rapid learning curve for me. The shepherds were endlessly helpful with suggestions of where, and by what means, shearers of the past had hung up their machines.

Their idea was, as long as it's off the ground it must be ok. They would show us long poles suspended by string that many shearers of the past had suspended machines. The string, like my back, lacked the structural integrity it once had, and the poles themselves were hardly better. I have a vivid recollection of a Kiwi colleague doing a chin-up on one to test its vigour, and crashing to the ground in a cloud of borer dust and wooden shrapnel.

The shepherd was cross "Why did you break it? That pole has been there since my father's time." We had two Sunbeam shoat machines which were really dagging plants but still weighed around 20kgs. Sometimes we hung them in trees or to rafters or occasionally to a front-end loader. This last one might seem like a good idea, but if offered, created some offense if not utilised.



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I found though, that few tractor hydraulics will maintain height for more than a few minutes. Soon the elbow would be too low and somebody would have to start the tractor to re-establish the required height. One such tractor was proudly owned by a shepherd who was an immensely rotund specimen. He sat all day on the tractor, wedged between the seat and steering-wheel, and would fire the tractor up when called upon. He didn't actually help but had a voice like a wounded buffalo, and had much to say about drafting, catching styles and pen settings. Soon it all became a bore and he drifted off to sleep.

The team that was helping took great delight in getting his attention by a variety of means like shouting and throwing dags. He would wake up with a start and the tractor would roar to life with a cloud of black smoke, and suddenly everything was too high. It didn't pay to be shearing when this happened.

Another colleague, who was a great shearer, was very poor with ropes and knots. I'd get a few done every day while he got his machine 'just right'. "Do it once, do it right!" he'd say. Then a few sheep later the whole turnout would fall down again and I'd get some more round him while he put it back up.

After a few years of this haphazard nonsense, we had stands built that would pack away in the car and we only had problems when the barn roof was too low.

One elderly sheep owner had a rope and pulley system that he was extremely proud of. He had a pulley out of sight in the shadows of the rafters and both ends of the rope tied to a ring on the wall. He would proudly proffer one end of the rope to tie the machine to while he maintained a firm grip on the other. Not using his rope was unthinkable. I would signal to him when the correct height was reached and he would tie a serious farmers knot. There could be no questioning of this knot either.

One year, I shored his sheep wet, because he thought they might be hungry and put them out for a quick feed during a thunder storm. When the last fat, wet texel was shorn, wanting to show he was still a helpful team player, loosed the knot before I was ready and the machine crashed to the concrete floor. This resulted in a few hundred deutschmarks worth of damage. What could I do? You can't just punch an old man (can you?)



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Above: Pretty ribbons – Nathan Stratford has the blue variety that Roy Orbison used to sing about, Jack Fagan has a red and white combination that goes with the PGG Wrightson VetMed National Circuit and the McSkimming Memorial Trophy; Jeremy Goodger and Conan Harmon are bedecked in red for winning the teams woolpressing final, and Taelor Tarrant from Taumarunui sports the red of the senior shearing championship which he won by 0.2 of a point from Dre Roberts of Matura.

Fairytale at the Fortieth NZ Champs

By Doug Laing (Shearing Sports NZ) and Des Williams

The 40th New Zealand Shears shearing and woolhandling championships at Te Kuiti last week ended in spectacular fashion with Jack Fagan winning the 25-sheep open championship – the first time he has made the six-stand final in 12 years of trying.

Fagan and 2025 champion Toa Henderson shore blow for blow almost throughout in the final act of the Shearing Sports New Zealand season – with Fagan denying Henderson the distinction of a second Golden Shears and New Zealand Shears season double.

Henderson was first off the board by less than three seconds, completing the country's longest shearing final in 18m 57.25s, exactly a minute faster than his time last year, but it was Fagan who claimed the title, which had been won 17 times by his father, Sir David Fagan.

The new champion had his previous biggest win in the National Shearing Circuit final at the Golden Shears in Masterton five weeks ago, but said after his victory he's been dreaming of winning the New Zealand Open for the 12 years he'd been in the top grade. "I'm a true believer in that you are who you surround yourself with," he said, in a tribute to those he's competed against, many of them contemporaries of his dad.

Southland shearer and 2024 champion Leon Samuels had the best board shearing points and claimed second place, with Masterton shearer David Gordon keeping the quality together enough to push Henderson back to fourth place.

Manawatu woolhandler Logan Kamura recorded his biggest win when he won the Open woolhandling final, with Marika Braddick, of Eketahuna, in second place, and third place going to 'local hope' Keryn Herbert, winner in both 2024 and 2025. The 31-year-old Kamura was runner-up last year, and had won at the Wairarapa, Central Hawke's Bay shows this season, before finishing runner-up at the Golden Shears to World champion Joel Henare.

Scottish shearer and southern Hawke's Bay farmer Gavin Mutch successfully defended the New Zealand Shears Circuit title, in a six-man final which provided a big moment for Eketahuna's Hemi Braddick who, as runner up and first-placed New Zealander, will join Fagan in a New Zealand team for a tour of the United Kingdom in July.

Braddick became the third member of his family to represent New Zealand in less than 12 months, with woolhandling sisters Ngaio Hanson having been in the New Zealand trans-Tasman team and Marika Braddick having won a World championships teams title at Masterton last month.



Above: Born on the first day of the New Zealand championships in 1992, Jack Fagan celebrated with a fairytale performance in the 40th anniversary New Zealand championships Open final of 2026. He has won some 'big ones' overseas in recent years, and made his mark at Golden Shears last month with victory in the National multi-breeds final, but winning on the stage his father dominated for 25 years tops all that. **Pictured above:** Jack Fagan with Kayna O'Carroll (FMG, sponsor.)

How the fairytale finish to the fortieth New Zealand open shearing championship unfolded: The final again set the contestants a 25-sheep challenge [most common is 20-sheep], as it had last year in what was a reversion to the original years of the 1980s and 1990s. Jack Fagan and David Gordon were newcomers to the up-town Saturday night stage at the Les Munro Centre, joining Leon Samuels, Toa Henderson, Nathan Stratford and Gavin Mutch.

The first part of the fairytale was established 40 yrs ago, arising from a trip to the Diamond Shears at Longreach, Queensland, by John and David Fagan in 1980. While on their return to New Zealand the brothers pondered what a boost to their district it would be if they could organise something on a similar scale in the King Country. They initially had Piopio in mind, but when that, after extensive investigations, proved impractical their attention turned to Te Kuiti.

It took four more years before their dream was launched as the King Country Shears in 1985 and John Fagan, nearing the end of his competitive career (having won Golden Shears in 1984) was the inaugural champion. He beat Colin King by just over a point, with David Fagan, Roger Cox, John Ruki and Ivan Rosandich filling the minor placings. Two years later the King Country Shears became the New Zealand championships.

Forty years roll by, David Fagan won the first of his 17 New Zealand open titles in 1986 (and the last in 2010), and only nine other shearers have added their names to the list in all that time, including Rowland Smith eight times and Paul Avery and John Kirkpatrick three times each.

The North Island Shearer of the Year (NISOY) event was also introduced to the programme in 1985 and the New Zealand Shears Circuit, was added in 1995.

So, 15 years since David Fagan's last victory; his son, Jack Fagan meantime had been giving hints of his higher intentions for his home town venue by winning the Circuit final in 2024 and the NISOY in 2025. A natural progression then, perhaps, to make the 2026 Open final for the first time after 12 years of trying and to raise hopes of a fairytale finish to the fortieth New Zealand Shears ...

Stand one, Leon Samuels; stand two, David Gordon; stand three, Nathan Stratford; stand four, Jack Fagan; stand five, Gavin Mutch; stand six, Toa Henderson. Let battle commence!

Fagan had his first sheep heading for the exit after just 40 seconds, while he and Henderson had two gone after 1min 24 seconds. Fagan then maintained a slender lead, never more than three or four shots through to sheep number 10 which were done in 7min 43s.

Fagan then changed a cutter, allowing Henderson to grab back the lead for a couple of sheep but this was a night when Fagan was not to be denied. Blow for blow they scrapped it out until Henderson had completed the task in 18min 57s and Fagan a blink of the eye past 19 minutes.

Leon Samuels on stand one had been lurking never far from the lead and he did make his customary surge towards the finish but his deficit of one minute on the clock (three points) was just too much to bridge with quality, though he conceded just 12 second cuts on 25 sheep. David Gordon and Nathan Stratford were always just off the frenetic pace of the leaders to suggest minor placings would be their lot at best on this anniversary night, though Gordon's quality bumped him up ahead of Henderson in the final reckoning.

Henderson did come out of the three days with one title, in the North Island Shearer of the Year final confirming his place as No. 1-ranked Open shearer for the season.

Southland shearer Dre Roberts reaffirmed his place as No. 1 Senior by winning the New Zealand Shears senior final, by just half-a-point from star-of-the-north Taelor Tarrant, of Taumarunui, while Tye Meikle, of Oamaru, claimed his 16th Intermediate win of the season, the most by any shearer or woolhandler in any grade.

It was a big week for Tararua District competitors, with Camden Bolton-Smith, of Woodville, winning the Junior shearing final, Dannevirke cousins Tahupotiki Hauiti and Hinepurotu Hauiti winning the Novice shearing and woolhandling titles respectively, and Laura Bradley, of Papatawa, retaining the women's shearing title.

The Senior woolhandling title was won by Tia Manson, of Piopio, and Jayda Millanta, from Te Kaha, won the Junior woolhandling final.

The shears attracted 115 in the five shearing classes (Open 44, Senior 17, Intermediate 13, Junior 25, Novice 16) and 66 in four woolhandling classes (Open 21, Senior 12, Junior 19, Novice 14).



Above: Hemi Braddick discovered there are sometimes prizes for second place. As first New Zealander (behind Scotsman Gavin Mutch) in the New Zealand Shears multi breeds circuit final he earned a place in the New Zealand team for a test match tour of the United Kingdom later this year. Below: Logan Kamura from Marton, a new name on the NZ Championships open woolhandling Honours Board. Second at Te Kuiti last year, second at Golden Shears this year, a most deserving addition to the top flight of woolhandling. With sponsor Daryl Croad and half of Marika Braddick. Sorry Marika!



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Taputawa/Te Whangai Romneys Inter-Island Challenge (10 sheep): South Island 99.237pts (Leon Samuels 8m 30.64s, 32.232pts; Nathan Stratford 9m 24.47s, 32.624pts; Casey Bailey 9m 47.61s, 34.381pts) beat North Island 99.391pts (8m 33.34s, 31.967pts; David Buick 8m 55.66s, 33.183pts; John Kirkpatrick 9m 22.81s, 34.241pts) by 0.154pts.

PGG Wrightson North Island Shearer of the Year (20 sheep – 10 ewes, 10 lambs): Toa Henderson (Kaiwaka) 14m 27.2s, 51.46pts, 1; Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 14m 24.91s, 52.546pts, 2; John Kirkpatrick (Pakipaki) 16m 13.5s, 54.075pts, 3; Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Dannevirke) 15m 24.5s, 54.625pts, 4; David Buick (Pongaroa) 15m 24.58s, 55.129pts, 5; Hemi Braddick (Eketahuna) 15m 52.2s, 55.36pts, 6.

Farmlands/Lamb Bain Laubscher New Zealand Shears Circuit (15 sheep – 5 merino, 5 second-shear, 5 lambs): Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Dannevirke) 13m 57.66s, 55.55pts, 1; Hemi Braddick (Eketahuna) 14m 38.42pts, 2; Paerate Abraham (Masterton) 14m 16.83s, 56.776pts, 3; Toa Henderson (Kaiwaka) 14m 38.78s, 57.872pts, 4; Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 15m 44.66s, 58.233pts, 5; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 16m 15.66s, 58.716pts, 6.

FMG/Pratts/Can Am New Zealand Shears Open (25 sheep): Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 19m 0.06s, 65.203pts, 1; Leon Samuels (19 59.81s, 66.631pts, 2; David Gordon (Masterton) 19m 42.27s, 67.234pts, 3; Toa Henderson (Kaiwaka) 18m 57.25s, 67.903pts, 4; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 22m 5.77s, 72.129pts, 5; Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Dannevirke) 20m 10.58s, 72.329pts, 7.

Ballance/Super Air New Zealand Shears Senior (12 sheep): Dre Roberts (Mataura) 12m 49.34s, 46.3pts, 1; Taelor Tarrant (Taumarunui) 12m 5.95s, 46.881pts, 2; Cody Waihape (Gore) 13m 6.58s, 47.245pts, 3; Kaivah Cooper (Napier) 13m 27.92s, 48.146pts, 4; Keahrey Manson (Piopio) 13m 26.27s, 56.314pts, 5; Duncan Adams (Banchory, Scotland) 13m 51.02s, 57.468pts, 6.

Mighty Mix New Zealand Shears Intermediate (8 sheep): Tye Meikle (Oamaru) 9m 3.89s, 32.195pts, 1; Lachie Cameron (Pohangina) 11m 26.39s, 38.57pts, 2; Lydia Thomson (Oxford/Hastings) 11m 51.27s, 39.564pts, 3; Connor Wilkinson (Wyndham) 10m 51.67s, 39.584pts, 4; Riley Norman (Pahiatua) 10m 35.09s, 40.005pts, 5;

Josh Balme (Otorohanga) 11m 0.86s, 40.418pts, 6.

Triple Farms New Zealand Shears Junior (5 sheep): Camden Bolton (Woodville) 8m 3.62, 31.596pts, 1; Cam Henson (Woodville) 8m 28.83s, 32.792pts, 2; Tane Maguire (Powys, Wales) 8m 42.02s, 34.301pts, 3; Alex Wrenn (Dannevirke) 8m 56.13s, 34.607pts, 4; Tana Maguire (Piopio) 8m 6.53s, 35.527pts, 5; Deakan Mullins-Henry (Dannevirke) 8m 37.19s, 39.86pts, 6.

K&L Shearing New Zealand Shears Novice (2 sheep): Tahu Hauiti (Dannevirke) 4m 0.36s, 22.518pts, 1; Oliver Bambry (Pahiatua) 5m 23.58s, 25.674pts, 2; Jack Bailey (Feilding) 6m 51.91s, 29.729pts, 3; Corey Mason (Te Kuiti) 6m 14.58s, 29.729pts, 4; Cleveland Pue (Raetihi) 7m 50.67s, 31.034pts, 5; Alexis Young (Gisborne) 8m 43.44s, 34.172pts, 6.

Power Farming New Zealand Shears Women (6 sheep): Laura Bradley (Papatawa) 7m 30s, 27.5pts, 1; Sarah Bryant (Arohena) 7m 51.44s, 32.572pts, 2; Lydia Thomson (Oxford/Hastings) 9m 54.2s, 37.21pts, 3; Peggy Sue Tohengaroa (Aria) 10m 2.92s, 39.979pts, 4; Rebecca Dickson (Feilding) 12m 5.02s, 44.91pts, 5; Ashlin Swann (Wairoa) 11m 39.25s, 45.463pts, 6.

Tiroa E & Te Hape B Trusts Whanau teams (6 sheep): Justin Meikle and Tye Meikle (Oamaru) 5m 49.06a, 21.787pts, 1; Peter Chilcott and Brook Hamerton (Hawke's Bay) 5m 55.81s, 22.791pts, 2; David Fagan and Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 6m 14.11s, 23.706pts, 3; James Braddick and Hemi Braddick (Eketahuna) 6m 33.72s, 26.186pts, 4; Ricky Alabaster and Reuben Alabaster (Taihape) 5m 48.11s, 27.406pts, 5; Digger and Josh Balme (Otorohanga) 6m 14.55s, 38.228pts, 6. (To next page)



Top: New Zealand Shears Circuit finalists, from left: Gavin Mutch, Hemi Braddick, Paerate Abraham, Toa Henderson, Jack Fagan and Nathan Stratford. **Above:** North Island Shearer of the Year finalists, from left: Razel Theron PGG Wrightson (sponsor), Toa Henderson, Jack Fagan, John Kirkpatrick, Gavin Mutch, David Buick, Hemi Braddick.

Palamountains Open Speed Shear: Reuben Alabaster (Taihape) 1; Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 2; Tiare Tipu (Hastings) 3.

Te Whangai Romneys Senior Speed Shear: Taelor Tarrant 1; Cheyden Winiana 2, Duncan Adams 3.

Woolhandling:

Wools of New Zealand Woolhandling Open (6 sheep): Logan Kamura (Marton) 58.86pts, 1; Marika Braddick (Eketahuna) 65pts, 2; Keryn Herbert (Te Kuiti) 68.894pts, 3; Hanatia Tipene (Te Kuiti) 85.8pts, 4; Vinniye Phillips (Taumarunui) 88.476pts, 5.

Wools of New Zealand Woolhandling Senior (5 sheep): Tia Manson (Piopio) 77.82pts, 1; Amy Bell (Weber) 77.93pts, 2; Chloe Henderson (Halcomb) 87.97pts, 3; Kelly Barrett (Kawhia) 89.97pts, 4; Paige Marshall (Kihikihi) 106.5pts, 5.

Monk Shearing New Zealand Shears Woolhandling Junior (4 sheep): Jayda Millanta (Te Kaha) 49.06pts, 1; Jade Hikiwai (Dannevirke) 51.69pts, 2; Shay Stewart (Napier) 73.03pts, 3; Atiria Barrowcliffe (Piopio) 78.32pts, 4; Opal Ramsay-Houpapa (Pongaroa) 92.62pts, 5

Briar Patch New Zealand Shears Novice (2 sheep): Hinepurotu Hauiti (Dannevirke) 49.98pts, 1; Gwen Rata (Taumarunui) 57.47pts, 2; Ella Crofskey (Palmerston North) 57.682pts, 3; Kobie Foster (Pongaroa) 61.786pts, 4; Shawna Swann (Wairoa) 100.13pts, 5.

Shearing Sports New Zealand No 1 rankings 2025-2026:
Shearing – Open, Toa Henderson (Kaiwaka); **Senior,** Taelor Tarrant (Taumarunu: Intermediate – Tye Meikle (Oamaru); **Junior –** Sean Dunne (Ireland).

Woolhandling – Open, Joel Henare (Gisborne/Motueka); **Senior,** Chloe Henderson (Feilding); **Junior,** Leah Tamainu (Nuhaka).



Above: There are no prizes for this, but Ant Frew from Pleasant Point (or Timaru, if you want to ruin my story!) got a very Pleasant surprize when his Points in the New Zealand open shearing semifinals revealed he had shorn eight sheep without conceding a second cut (or "board point"), as confirmed by the row of zeroes in the blue computer scoring summary in the above photo. He emptied his pen in 7min 30s and conceded 3.125 penalty points to the outside judges for an overall total (time included) of 25.649. A number of learned memories in the audience "thought they could recall" six sheep being shorn without a board penalty, but eight was something new, especially in a shear at semifinal speed.

Below: The 2026 New Zealand team for the annual visit to the United Kingdom for tests against the home countries. Jack Fagan and Hemi Braddick, with manager Dig Balme in the middle.



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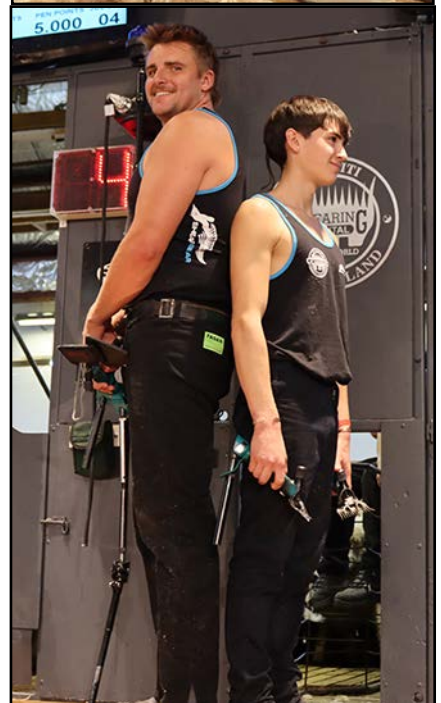
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Top: Participants in the New Zealand Championships Contractors' Relay. We didn't get all the names but that's the winning team, Balme & Sons Shearing in the blue singlets, back row left, for the third year in succession. **Above:** Tia Manson, senior champion. **Middle left:** The senior woolhandling finalists: Todd Oliver (for Wools of New Zealand), Tia Manson, Amy Bell, Chloe Henderson, Kelly Barratt and Paige Marshall. **Below left,** Open woolhandling finalists: Daryl Croad (for Sponsor WONZ), Logan Kamura, Marika Braddick, Keryn Herbert, Hanatia Tipene, Vinniye Phillips and Sir David Fagan (NZ Shears president). Kamura's victory denied Keryn Herbert the honour of recording three open woolhandling wins in succession - previously achieved at Te Kuiti by Susan Biddle, Sheree Alabaster and Joel Henare.



Top: New Zealand Open finalists: Kayna O'Carroll, FMG sponsor; Jack Fagan, Leon Samuels, David Gordon, Toa Henderson, Nathan Stratford, Gavin Mutch, Ben Pratt (Pratt Motorcycles, sponsor). **Middle:** Senior shearing finalists. Sponsor Ballance/Super Air; Dre Roberts, Taelor Tarrant, Cody Waihape, Kaivah Cooper, Keahrey Manson, Duncan Adams and Sean Fagan, winner of the Overall quality award. **Above:** Could this be the dream team commentating lineup of the season? From left: Shane Ratima, Mike Henderson, Ant Frew and Tuma Mullins. **Above right descending:** Tiny Dancers (sings Elton John) entertaining the audience before the "Big Dance"; Dre Roberts (senior); Josh Balme and Tye Meikle, illustrating the David and Goliath nature of intermediate shearing. As in days of old, it was the 'David' who won on this occasion – Tye Meikle, adding to the New Zealand junior title he won last year. Balme was sixth after shearing in the semifinals, dashing away to play senior club rugby and lock the scrum for Hamilton Marist against Te Awamutu, and returning in time to shear the final.

Animal welfare CCTV trials in woolsheds

By Jills Angus Burney

Much anticipated trials of CCTV camera surveillance have taken place in a working woolshed high up in the Rakaia Gorge. The CCTV trial is a part of trans-Tasman initiatives following allegations by PETA animal rights group in December 2024 of sheep mistreatment during pre-lamb winter shearing.

The CCTV initiative is a collaboration between Zentera (formerly The NZ Merino Company) with selected Canterbury and Victorian woolgrowers. While still in the trial mode following the second data-gathering phase, the system is intended that the grower will own the footage, with access by contractors and shed workers.

Driving these partnerships are significant stakeholders in the industry, led by the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) and the NZ Veterinary Association (NZVA) connecting with rival wool buyer entities PGG Wrightson Wool and Zentera. The New Zealand Shearing Contractors Association (NZSCA) and the Elite Wool Industry Training (EWIT) organisation represent the shearing industry and Wool Impact, the wool advocacy and resource hub, connected their stakeholders.

Zentera General Manager for Global Supply, Matt Hand told *Shearing* this collaboration fell from a workshop in March 2025 to address the fall-out from the PETA scandal. Facilitating the workshop was the experienced agricultural leader, strategist, and facilitator Dr Scott Champion, which also included the animal rights group Four Paws, whose global animal welfare organisation is headquartered in Vienna, Austria.

Ensuring good animal welfare is critical to protecting New Zealand's wool industry, says Ross McIssac of Wool Impact.

Wool Impact's message is universal to growing the wool market. Animal integrity underpins wool's acceptance by global consumers. Behaviour preserves market access since everyone involved with producing and harvesting wool has a

responsibility to understand and uphold good animal welfare practices for the wellbeing of both the animals and people and the prosperity of the sector.

These initiatives have a purpose to improve and not police the harvesting of wool, Hand says. The goal is a workable system that protects each of the parties in the supply chain. While animal welfare training is not mandated, Hand believes that with over 500 shed workers trained so far, the industry on both sides of the Tasman is ready to step up.

NZVA says that the SPCA supports camera monitoring of animals in stressful areas such as meat works and shearing sheds, but it accepts that the government has no desire to make it compulsory.

SPCA's chief scientific officer, Dr Arnja Dale has said MPI Verification Services, and the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) had raised concerns beyond the PETA complaints about an increase in shearing injuries and cuts evident when sheep arrive at meat works.

NAWAC's proposed new code of welfare would require shearing cuts or injuries be identified and appropriate treatment applied.

As is currently done in Australia with muelsing and pain relief rules, NZ Vet Association vets advocate the use of active pain relief and treatment of cuts, which could include veterinary care, and handling sheep in a low-stress way.

"We need to create an environment in the shearing shed that mistreating animals is not acceptable."

The New Zealand government and industry are collectively funding in-person and online training to improve animal health and welfare outcomes in New Zealand's wool harvesting industry.

The industry's premier training organisation, Elite Wool Industry Training, who operate global partnerships, are delivering the animal welfare training in New Zealand. The modules were developed with input from across the wool

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Above: Southland's Max Winders (proprietor of Max Winders Shearing) represented the Cook Islands at the recent world championships in Masterton. With partner Noel Gardiner from Whanganui, the pair won the world teams 'B' final, effectively placing them seventh in the world, ahead of 'powerhouse' nations' France, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

sector, government and animal welfare experts following the March 2025 workshop, and refined through trans-Tasman delivery since last winter.

In December 2025 the government and the shearing industry announced ring-fenced funding of \$75,000 for a programme to further improve animal welfare in the industry. This funding has gone towards more workshops, online modules, practical assessments, and resources for shearers, woolhandlers, and others across the sector. The new funding is targeting training initiatives that build knowledge, skills, and best practice in animal care and welfare compliance in the shearing industry.

The fund is administered by Wool Impact, with an oversight from a steering committee that includes the NZSCA. This specific training is important to meet changing market demands while preserving and protecting New Zealand's reputation for producing the best quality wool and sound shearing practices.

The fund is made up from that Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) who contributed \$25,000 to the one-year pilot, with PGG Wrightson and Zentera each contributing \$15,000, Wool Impact providing \$15,000, and the New Zealand Shearing Contractors Association investing \$5000. The New Zealand Veterinary Association is providing in-kind support.

This followed MPI's \$75,000 investment in June 2025 into Zentera's Cadetship Programme, which expanded cadet

training from twelve to thirty-two cadets and included the dedicated animal welfare module being rolled out by Elite Wool Industry Training. Their three-month cadetships since 2020 have provided numerous emerging leaders among shearers and wool handlers, with opportunities to upskill and to understand the chain of production from the woolshed to retail.

The animal welfare training modules for woolshed staff was a first for the sector and could be a funding model for future training. Training that will ensure shearers and woolhandlers have the correct skills to cope when under pressure.

When the Waimarino shears delivered its 4th Te Akoranga Kutihipi beginner shearing course at Ohorea Station, Raetihi they did so this year in partnership with EWIT training.

The Animal Welfare Course was embedded into the Kaupapa for 45 shearers and kamahi delivered by Elite Instructor, Brya Harrison.

The Waimarino Shears say they took the opportunity in March to enhance its existing delivery of the course which is competency-based learning on the shearing pattern, shearing gear preparation & maintenance, video analysing shearing, health and fitness and Te Reo Māori.

Animal welfare plays an integral part of the Waimarino competition. Spokesperson, Brendon Morgan says that it was important for their volunteers to also participate in the animal welfare training as it is vital to bring awareness to care of the animals presented for the competition as it's a joint responsibility.



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